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LOS ANGELES

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
W O M E N,
FROM THE
EARLIEST ANTIQUITY, TO THE PRESENT TIME;

GIVING
Some Account of almost every interesting Particular concerning
that Sex, among all Nations, ancient and modern.

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER, M. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the following Work was composed solely for the amusement and instruction of the Fair Sex; and as their education is in general less extensive than that of the men; in order to render it the more intelligible, we have studied the utmost plainness and simplicity of language; have not only totally excluded almost every word that is not English, but even, as much as possible, avoided every technical term.

As we persuade ourselves, that nothing could be more perplexing to the sex, or to which they would pay less attention, than a long list of authors [on the margin, to shew from whence we have derived our information, and as a great part of such list would refer to books in other languages, we have entirely omitted it, and contented ourselves with sometimes interweaving into our text, the names and sentiments of such authors as have more peculiarly elucidated the subjects we were investigating.

A 2

WE

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

WE have not vanity enough to recommend our Work to the learned, they must have met with every anecdote related in it; but as the generality of the fair sex, whose reading is more confined, now spend many of their idle hours in poring over novels and romances, which greatly tend to mislead the understanding and corrupt the heart, we cannot help expressing a wish, that they would spare a part of this time to look into the history of their own Sex; a history, which we flatter ourselves will afford them no irrational amusement, and which will more gratify the curiosity of the female mind in whatever relates to themselves, than any thing that has hitherto been published.

WE do not mean by this to praise ourselves; we submit with the utmost diffidence to the judgment of the Public. If we have any merit, it is only in collecting together, and presenting in one view, a variety of anecdotes concerning the sex, which lay scattered in a great number of authors, ancient and modern, and not within the reading of the Sex themselves; recourse to larger libraries might have made these anecdotes more numerous, and better judgments would have selected them more judiciously; on these accounts, none can be more sensible of the imperfections of the Work than we

I

are,

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

are, but we hope our candid Readers will make some allowances for our having trod a path which has never been attempted before ; and the Ladies, we flatter ourselves, will treat us with some indulgence, when we assure them, that we have exerted our utmost abilities to put their history into the most engaging dress, and to mingle pleasure with instruction.

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I N T R O-

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH there is nothing in nature that so much engages our attention, so forcibly draws our inclinations, or with which our interests are so intimately blended, as with the other sex, yet so strong is our partiality to ourselves, that we have never in any period, nor in any country, sufficiently attended to the happiness and interests of those beings, whom in every period, and in every country, we have professed to love and to adore: and while the charms which they possess, have every where extorted from us the tribute of love, they have only in a few places extorted from us good usage.

ALMOST every man is full of complaints against the sex, but hardly do we meet with any one who seriously endeavours to rectify the evils against which he exclaims so bitterly. He who considers women only as objects of his love, and of his pleasure; complains, that in his connections with them, he finds them inconstant, unfaithful, and ever open to flattery and seduction. The philosopher, who would wish to mingle the joys of friendship and of conversation with those of love, complains that they are destitute of every idea, but those that flow from gallantry and self-admiration; and consequently incapable of giving or receiving

Complaints
against the
sex.

ing any of the more refined and intellectual pleasures. The man of business complains, that they are giddy and thoughtless, and want the plodding head, and the saving hand, so necessary towards thriving in the world. And almost every man complains, of their idleness, extravagance, disregard to every kind of admonition, and neglect of the duties of domestic and social life.

Causes of
these com-
plaints.

WITHOUT examining how far these general complaints are well or ill founded, we shall only observe, that in cases where they are well founded, when we trace them to their source, we find the blame ultimately fall on ourselves. Does not the man of love and gallantry commonly set the example of infidelity and inconstancy to the females with whom he is connected? And do not men in general, but too obviously, chalk out to the other sex, the way that leads to every levity and folly? What made the philosopher so susceptible of the rational and the intellectual pleasures? doubtless, the education bestowed upon him; and the same education might have given his wife or his daughter, an equal, or even a superior relish for them; it is folly in him therefore to expect the fruit without the culture necessary to bring it to perfection. The plodding and steadiness of the man of business, he has acquired in his early years; and they are augmented by his being sole master of what he can amass, and having a power to spend or dispose of it as he thinks proper. But his wife was brought up in no such school, and has no such motives to industry; for should she even toil with the utmost assiduity, she cannot appropriate to herself what she acquires; nor lay out any part of it without leave of her husband. Nor is the idleness, extravagance, and neglect of domestic duties, which we so commonly charge upon the sex, so much the fault of nature as of education. Can

we expect that the girl whom we train up in every fashionable levity and folly, whom we use our utmost efforts to flatter and to amuse, shall, the moment of her marriage, totally change her plan, and become the sober and oeconomic housewife? as well might we sow weeds and expect to reap corn.

IF this be, as we persuade ourselves it is, a candid and impartial state of the source of female folly and of female weakness; if the whole may be traced either to the total want of, or to an improper education; and if the power of neglecting this education altogether, or bestowing it improperly, be lodged in our hands, as having the sole management and direction of the sex; then it will follow, that we should act a much better and more becoming part, in trying to amend their faults by a more judicious instruction, than to leave them ignorant, and complain that they are so; or teach them folly, and rail at them for having learned what we taught them. But instead of doing this, in every age, and in every country, while the men have been partial to the persons of the fair, they have either left their minds altogether without culture, or biased them by a culture of a spurious and improper nature; suspicious, perhaps, that a more rational one would have opened their eyes, shewn them their real condition, and prompted them to assert the rights of nature; rights, of which the men have perpetually, more or less, deprived them.

BUT we do not only neglect the sex, or mislead them in point of education; while youth and beauty is on their side, the scene which we open to them is all delusion, flattery, and falsehood; for while we take every opportunity of telling them when present, that their persons are all beauty, and their sentiments and

actions all perfection; when absent, we laugh at the credulity of their minds, and splenetically satirise and exhibit to view every fault and every folly. Nor is it till they have become wives, or till the wrinkles have furrowed their brows, that the other sex hear the voice of truth from ours.

Satirists, how
they have
treated the
sex.

NOR are the follies and foibles of the sex, only the subject of verbal sneer, and of verbal criticism; such of our sex as have been soured by disappointments of any kind, and more particularly those who have been unfortunate in the pursuit of lawful, and still more so, in that of unlawful love; like cowards who attack every one who, they are assured, will make no resistance, have in all ages dipped their pens in gall, and for the supposed faults of a few, illiberally vomited out spleen and ill-nature against the whole sex. Among the earliest of these kind of writers we may justly reckon Solomon, who sated with licentious love, cloyed with venal charms, and perhaps shattered in constitution, took almost every opportunity to exclaim against the slaves of his seraglio, and the whole sex; because they could afford him no new pleasure, and because they were not equal in mental qualifications to the men; a thing which Solomon might easily have found to be impossible, had he attended to the method in which they were educated, and in which they were confined. Some also of the Apocryphal writers are nothing behind Solomon in spleen, and greatly exceed him in ill-nature and coarseness of expression. But it seems to have been the genius of the East to praise all women for their personal graces, and at the same time to suppose them entirely divested of every good quality of the mind; for we find the same ideas which were entertained by Solomon, diffused among the Hindoos even in an earlier period of the world, and venting them-
selves

ſelves alſo in their ſacred writings even with an additional degree of acrimony. “The luſt of a woman (ſays the Pundits) is never ſatiſfied, no more than fire is ſatiſfied with fuel, or the main ocean with receiving the rivers, or the empire of death with the dying of men and animals.” And again, “Women have fix qualities: the firſt, an inordinate deſire for jewels and fine furniture, handſome clothes, and nice victuals; the ſecond, immoderate luſt; the third, violent anger; the fourth, deep reſentment, no perſon knowing the ſentiments concealed in their heart; the fifth, another perſon’s good appears evil in their eyes; the ſixth, they commit bad actions.” With ſuch inveſtives of the eaſterns we could fill a whole volume; but we have only ſeleſted theſe, to ſhew that their opinions were not ſupported by any argument, nor tinctured with any wit; and that on theſe accounts we may ſuppoſe them only mere effuſions of the ſpleen. Nor were the Greek and Roman writers more refined in their ſentiments, or delicate in their expreſſions. The language uſed by ſome of the Greek writers, as well as by Juvenal, Martial, and Horace, is too coarſe and unpoliſhed for a people juſt emerged from barbarity, and conveys to us a mean idea of Greek and Roman politeneſs.

AFTER women had been the ſubject of ſatirical wit and of ſple-
netic temper for upwards of three thouſand years, an inſtitution
at laſt aroſe in Europe, known by the name of chivalry, which
for ſome time totally changed the ſentiments and writings of
mankind, and placing the ſex hardly beneath ceſtial beings,
made it ſomething more than treaſon to maltreat, and ſcarcely leſs
than blaſphemy to ſpeak evil of them. The times, however,
in which chivalry flouriſhed in its greateſt perfection, were not
thoſe

Favourable
turn in the
condition of
the ſex.

those of writing ; but when it began to decline, and letters to mix with gallantry, the effusions of wit took another direction, and the men, instead of striving against each other who should most vilify the sex, entered the lists with another intention, that of shewing their superior merit, and even of persuading the world, that of all the joys we can experience in the present, or hope for in the life to come, love is the only one worth our care and solicitude.

ANCIENTLY the bards had only been employed to sing the exploits of heroes, or of the rich who entertained them in their train. In the decline of chivalry, they began also to sing the praises of beauty, and the sweets of love. In the praise of beauty they were to the last degree extravagant and hyperbolical : not satisfied with comparing their mistresses, as in modern times, to angels and other inferior celestial beings ; they were not ashamed to compare them to, and even to exalt them above the Supreme Being himself. In celebrating the enjoyments of love, they were not less wild and romantic, and imagined that even paradise without it would be joyless and insipid. Boccace, in the most serious manner, classed together God and the ladies, and thanked them for their mutual assistance in defending him against his enemies ; and Petrarch no less seriously compares Laura, his mistress, to Jesus Christ. Deudes de Prade, a priest and poet, who used to sing the praises of women, says, that he would not wish to enter into heaven, but on condition of making love to her whom he adored.

To praise the
sex became
fashionable.

WE are not much surprised to find the poets, or troubadours, who were retained by the rich and the beautiful, and paid for their songs, flattering greatness and extolling beauty. But they
were

were not the only set of men who thus employed themselves : the humour became general ; poets, priests, gentlemen, all dedicated their literary talents to the praise of women ; and it became at last unnecessary for them to hire poets, when all ranks of people voluntarily enlisted themselves in their service.

BOCCACE seems to have been the first who started the idea of writing any thing larger than a song or sonnet in praise of the sex. He published a Latin treatise, intitled “ Of illustrious “ Women ;” and in search of them he ransacked the whole circuit of fable, of the sacred, and of the Greek and Roman histories. The idea was too happily adapted to the taste of the times, to be allowed to sink into oblivion ; it was soon, therefore, taken up by a numerous herd of imitators. Francis Sordonati improving upon it, collected from every polished and from every barbarous nation to the number of one hundred and twenty, the names of such as had escaped Boccace. This mode of writing now became fashionable, in a few years not less than twenty authors had published in praise of women. The heroine, the religiosa, and the learned flood foremost in the catalogue. But the inferior virtues did not pass unnoticed ; and at last, even the making of an excellent pudding, and every other species of culinary merit, came to be the subject of panegyric : and in spite of all their natural phlegm, even the Dutch felt the enthusiasm, and contributed their mite to the praise of the sex.

SUBJECTS of writing upon, like modes of dress, have their turns of being fashionable : this was the period in which the fashionable topic was to extol all the virtues, and to varnish over all the vices of women. Much had already been said and wrote on
the

the subject : but Hilario da Costa, a monk, resolving to exceed all who had gone before him, published two quarto volumes, of eight hundred pages each ; containing, according to his account, the panegyrics of all the women of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who had distinguished themselves by any remarkable talents or virtues. But as if no talent nor any virtue could exist without the pale of the catholic church, the partial ecclesiastic passes in silence over every woman of other principles ; and while he loudly praises the virtues of Mary queen of England, whose memory succeeding ages have held in contempt ; of her sister Elizabeth, whom her country still remembers with gratitude, he makes no mention. The eulogies of this monk amount to one hundred and seventy. But who can ensure to himself, in this delusory world, the summit of greatness or of fame ? The voluminous labours of our monk were soon after greatly surpassed by Paul de Ribera, who was delivered of a monstrous work, which he called “ The Triumphs and heroic Enterprizes of eight hundred Women.”

ON reading these accounts a reflection naturally arises, that either the women of these times must have been very remarkable for their virtues and good qualities, or the men must have basely prostituted their talents to adulation and flattery. The truth seems to be, that both were in some measure the case : the subject, as we have just now remarked, was fashionable, and it intitled the writer to the smiles and approbation of the fair ; and their smiles and approbation, besides flattering his vanity, were the road to honour and to preferment. Nor was the spirit of chivalry as yet so far evaporated, as to leave the men at liberty to consider the sex in a calm and dispassionate light, or to write any thing concerning
them

them that did not set them something above the level of mortality. The women too, emulous of glory and of praise, were, by these writings, stimulated to great and to virtuous actions; they inspired the men to ascribe to them noble deeds and sentiments, and they acted and thought nobly, that they might not falsify the opinions entertained of them; hence these times produced more extraordinary women, than have ever at any other period appeared in Europe.

WHEN this kind of gallantry, which taught every man to consider every woman as a kind of superior being, had wore itself out by the most extravagant exertions, the minds of men took an opposite direction, and began to consider the sex, either in a diminutive, or contumelious light; looking upon them, either as the play-things of a sportive hour, or the mere instruments of animal pleasure; divesting them of almost all sentiment, and avoiding almost all serious connection with them. In England, the libertinism of the court of Charles the Second first debauched the morals of almost all the women, and then taught the men to despise them for the want of what they themselves had robbed them of. Things having taken this turn, it soon became as fashionable to write against the women, as it had been before to write in their favour. The earl of Rochester set the example, and it was soon followed by Pope, Swift, Young, and a variety of other inferior scribblers; all of whom assert, that their intention was thereby to reclaim a sex, which, in the prosecution of vice and folly, had resisted every other effort. But if such really was their intention, which there are some reasons to doubt; the event has shewn how ill it was adapted to the purposes intended; the praises bestowed on women in former times, fired them with a great and a virtuous

The sentiments of the men take an opposite direction.

INTRODUCTION.

emulation; the satire thrown out against them by the writers we have mentioned, has only incited their indignation, instead of amending their heart.

SUCH have been the modes of writing concerning the sex, and such have been the effects of these writings. Let us now take a short view of the revolutions which have happened to their character and manners in Europe, from the destruction of the Roman empire to the present time.

WHEN the ancient Germans sallied from their woods and caverns, to give laws and customs to all Europe, their women, as we shall see afterward, were, in many respects, of equal, and sometimes even of greater, consideration and consequence than their men. When these Germans had settled themselves in almost every country, and when, from that mixture of religion, gallantry, and war, for which they were conspicuous, had arisen that species of romantic heroism, called chivalry, we have the strongest reason to believe, that the value which it stamped on their women, communicated to them a dignity and pride, which contributed to render them as virtuous as perhaps the women of any country or period have ever been.

Causes of this
change of
sentiment.

BUT when chivalry began to degenerate, and when knight-hood, the chief of its honours, instead of being eagerly courted, and only attained by a long series of valorous and meritorious actions, came to be annexed to the possession of a certain quantity of land; prostituted to every one who desired, and even to serve the purposes of the great; forcibly obtruded on those who sedulously avoided it; the public honour of the men began to decline, their behaviour to the women became less respectful; the
women.

women lost much of their dignity, and with it no small share of their virtue. The history of all the European nations now exhibited a picture the most sadly reversed from what it was before; the men had lost all their deference for the sex, and the women had lost all the chastity that inspired it; the coarsest familiarity of manners, and the most scandalous profligacy of character in both sexes ensued.

IN France, instead of approaching the women with that respectful deference, to which they had been accustomed, and which is a tribute due to modesty, it now became fashionable for the men to intrude themselves upon them every where, with the most indecent familiarity. The sex might easily have discouraged this, but they rather gave it countenance; and the consequence was, that all sexual decorum being nearly extinguished, the familiarity allowed to the men, in time, began to be productive of contempt; and the grossest debauchery succeeded the most sentimental love. Even the name of delicacy was almost lost. Women of all ranks and conditions admitted their male visitors with the same indifference, while in bed in their chamber, as to the side of their parlour fire; councils of state were frequently held in the bed-chambers of ladies while in bed, who often determined by their voice, but more commonly by promises of secret favours, the resolutions that were taken.

NOR were the manners of the English ladies much more reserved, or their characters more sacred than those of the French. The same indecent familiarity marked their public, and the same licentiousness, their private, behaviour: during the Christmas holidays, almost every nobleman entertained his vassals of both

fexes, a neighbouring clergyman was generally chosen by him, to preside over this riotous mirth and indecent festivity, who, from the nature of his office, was commonly called by the name of the Abbot of Misrule. In the houses of the great, were generally apartments destined for the women, who were employed in embroidery, and other kinds of needle-work; and the name given to these apartments, in consequence of the use that was made of them, came in time to be synonymous to that of a brothel. Nay, so lost to public decency were all ranks of men, that even the clergy were not ashamed to have inscriptions over the doors of these apartments, signifying the use to which they were appropriated*. Nor did gentlemen of considerable property blush, to hold lands by, and bear commissions, for being marshal of the king's whores.

Female delicacy begins to revive.

SOME time previous to the reign of queen Elizabeth, the delicacy and decency of the female character had begun to revive: from her time, to that of the Protector, their manners were still refining; but during his administration, sanctimoniously enthusiastic, devotion struggled hard to exclude nature, and slovenliness and superstition to substitute themselves for religion. The Restoration turned again the channel of their manners, and gave it a direction only to pleasure and licentious love; the distractions, during the reign of James II., abated a little that fervour for pleasure; and the settled situation of affairs that took place under William III., together with the disapprobation shewn by the court to unlawful gallantry, gave to the female character that turn towards the decency and politeness of manners, in which it

* The celebrated Cardinal Wolsey, over a door of a particular part of his palace, had these words in Latin: "The house of the whores of my lord the Cardinal."

has

has now made so considerable a progress. We cannot help taking notice here, that if we may credit the declaimer, the satirist, and the preacher, the female virtues are at present on the decline. For our parts, we pretend not to decide on so delicate a point; and only express our hopes, that the conduct of our fair countrywomen will in this particular contribute to give the lie to the satirist, the declaimer, and even to the preacher himself.

WHILE the manners and the character of the European women have been held out in such a variety of different lights; while they have been liable to so many mutations, from the changes of fashion, of government, and religion; the women of the East have exhibited always the same appearance: their manners, customs, and fashions, like their rocks, have stood unaltered the test of many revolving ages; and though the kingdoms of which they are a part, have often changed masters, and yielded to the victorious arms of a conqueror; yet the laws by which they are governed and enslaved, have never been revised nor amended.

Of the eastern
women.

SUCH being the case, in taking an introductory view of the eastern women, we are, like the man, who, from an eminence surveying the surface of a placid ocean, looks out in vain for variety or diversity. The Hindoo women, who inhabit the greatest part of the East Indies, have been time immemorial almost in every respect the same as at present: and even the religion of Mahomet, which gave to the women who professed it, no less an advantage over the disciples of Brama, than an exemption from burning on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands, could never induce one single Hindoo to become Mahomedan, nor ever made the smallest change in their condition, or in the least altered their cus-

toms.

toms. This exemption, however, was the only advantage introduced by the religion of Mahomet among the women of the East. It abated not the rigour of their confinement, nor conferred upon them any more consequence.

As Asia was formerly the seat of learning, and is now that of ignorance, we are better acquainted with the ideas which the Asiatics entertained of their women many years ago, than we are at present; and have already seen, that these ideas, besides their being unfavourable, were often expressed in the most coarse and indelicate manner. Had the manners and customs of their women been subject to the same changes as they are in Europe, we might have expected the same changes in the sentiments and writings of their men: but as this is not the case, we have reason to presume, that the same sentiments entertained by Solomon, by some of the apocryphal writers, and by the ancient Pundits *, are the sentiments of this day: and in this opinion we are the more confirmed, when we consider, that, in the treatment of the sex, no alteration for the better has ever yet taken place; which must undoubtedly have been the case, had the sentiments of the men concerning them been more favourable.

BUT while such are the sentiments of the Asiatics, while such is the manner in which they treat their women, their tongues, in the utmost dissonance to these sentiments, constantly utter a language to which their hearts are entirely strangers, and the whole of their actions flatly contradict their words: while, in the absence of the sex, they seem to despise and treat them with contempt; in their presence, when infligated by animal love, they not only

* Pundits are the Braminical expositors of the laws of the Hindoos.

pay them the greatest deference, but even accost them as something more than mortal : when the love fit is over, though their tongues may still retain the same language, they will amid all this abuse and prostitution of words, chastise with severity for the slightest offence, her whom they seemed to adore ; will, without any offence whatever, keep her shut up from society, and almost from the light of heaven, a perpetual prisoner ; and, if jealousy should arise in their breasts, consign her to expire amid the most cruel tortures, while themselves glory and exult in her sufferings.

SUCH, with little alteration, has been, from the remotest antiquity, the condition of the weaker sex, over the greater part of Asia and Africa ; and such it will probably continue, as long as the men continue the slaves of a despot, and perhaps the still greater slaves of ignorance and barbarity.

WHEN Vespuceius discovered America, he opened a field for the ambition of the statesman, the avarice of the trader, and the contemplation of the philosopher. He found that vast continent peopled by a race, or rather divers races of mortals, scarcely less distinct in their persons, than in their manners and customs, from these of the Old World ; and when compared to them, only mere children in all the arts which render life comfortable, and distinguish man from the beasts of the field. Such were both sexes : the women were but little distinguished from the men by their dress, where any dress was made use of ; nor were they much inferior to them in bodily strength, and hardly less patient of cold, hunger, thirst, or less qualified to hunt and to fish for their subsistence.

Of the American women.

silence. But notwithstanding of this natural equality, the men had completely enslaved them, and thrown upon their shoulders all that could be called labour, either in the house or in the field, while they themselves were above undertaking any thing but the sports of the chase, or the depredations of war. Thus oppressed and disheartened, the fair sex were entire strangers to the friendship of the men, and not much the object of their love. They passed through life almost without tasting any of its pleasures, and could hardly be said to enjoy one privilege beside personal liberty.

BUT this was not the case in every part of America. Among some tribes the women enjoyed almost the whole, and among others a great share of the legislative authority. The condition of the sex was not, however, properly adjusted to any medium : they were every where either exalted to a degree far beyond the dictates of good policy, and vested with powers and privileges of the most exorbitant nature, or sunk to a level with the beasts, and depressed by the most abject slavery.

SUCH was the state in which they were found by the first discoverers of America ; a state, from which it was natural to suppose they would soon have been rescued by European politeness and humanity : but the case was far otherwise ; our sordid love of their gold overcame our politeness, banished humanity from our breasts ; and instead of abolishing the slavery of the women, made us with a more than savage barbarity, wherever our power could reach, extend it to the men also.

IN

IN the condition we have now described had the women of America, in all probability, been for time immemorial : but as they had not the art of writing, and consequently no historical records, we know not whether their states ever suffered any revolution, or whether they ever altered or improved their manners and customs. It is pretended, indeed, that the Mexicans had a kind of historical records, composed of what they called *Qui-pos*, or Chords, so knotted and twisted, as to be able to relate the whole series of past events, with the same clearness and precision as our books : but the little that was ever learned concerning the ancient state of America, seems to demonstrate the falsity of this opinion.

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
W O M E N.

C H A P. I.

A short sketch of the Antediluvian History of Women.

BY the Mosaic history of the creation it appears, that the males and females of all the other animals, except man, were formed, not only of the same materials, and in the same manner, but also at the same time. When the sacred historian, however, describes the creation of the human genus; he informs us, that the female was distinguished from the male by being formed not of the dust of the earth, as he was, but of a part of the body of the male himself *. Such as have been fond

C H A P.
I.

* Various and ridiculous are the fables related by oriental writers concerning the creation of the first pair. We shall only mention a few of these propagated by the Jewish Rabbies, whose ancient legends equal, if not surpass, in absurdity even those of more modern ages.—God, say they, at first created Adam with a long tail; but afterward, on considering him attentively, he thought he would look better without it: resolving, however, not to lose any thing that he had made, he cut it off, and formed it into a woman: and hence the sex derive their low and inferior nature. Others of them tell us, that the first human being was created double, of both sexes, and joined side to side; that God improving on his original plan, separated the male from the female part, where they had been joined together, and made them into two distinct beings; and that from hence arose the perpetual inclination of the sexes to join themselves together again.

C H A P.
I.

of maintaining the superiority of women pretend, that from this circumstance of having been made of double refined matter, they have derived their superior beauty and excellence.

NOT long after the creation, the deception of the first woman by the serpent, and the fatal consequences arising from that deception, furnish the most interesting story in the whole history of the sex. But as that story is already so well known, we shall pass over it in silence, and proceed to relate those few anecdotes which have been handed down to us concerning the antediluvian women.

Cause of the
dispute be-
tween Cain
and Abel.

IN the sacred history we are told, that when Cain and Abel, the two sons of Adam, brought their offerings to the Lord, the offering of Cain was rejected, and that of Abel accepted; a circumstance for which Moses does not assign any reason. If tradition, however, deserves any credit, an oriental tradition supplies this defect; and informs us, that Cain and Abel having each of them a twin sister, when they were all become marriageable, Adam proposed to them, that Cain should marry the twin sister of Abel, and Abel the twin sister of Cain; alleging as his reason for this proposal, that as their circumstances obliged them to marry their sisters, it was proper that they should marry those that were seemingly the least related to them. To this proposal Cain would not agree, and insisted on having his own twin sister, because she was fairer than the other. Adam, displeased at this act of disobedience, referred the dispute to the decision of the Lord; ordered his sons to bring each an offering before him; and told them, that the offering which had the preference, would be a declaration in favour of him who presented it. On the offerings being

brought, and that of Abel accepted, Cain, stimulated by resentment and love, began to revolve in his mind how he might get rid of so dangerous a rival, and not being able to fix upon any other method than his destruction, as soon as they were come down from the Mount where they had been sacrificing, fell upon him and slew him. And thus a woman became the cause not only of the first quarrel, but of the first introduction of death.

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CAIN and his posterity being, for this barbarous deed, separated and exiled from the rest of the human race, began to abandon themselves to every species of wickedness; and it is supposed were, on that account, at length denominated Sons and Daughters of Men: while the posterity of Seth, under the care and tuition of Adam, having as remarkably distinguished themselves for virtue, and a regard to the divine precepts, at length also acquired the appellation of Sons and Daughters of God. This family of Seth, according to the oriental writers, fixed its habitation on the mountain where Adam their progenitor was buried; and from the sacred dust deposited there, called it the Holy Mountain: while Cain and his posterity inhabited the valley below*, and there constantly rioted in every species of lewdness and debauchery. In the time of Jared, when the family of Seth was much increased, one hundred and twenty of the sons of that family, or as they were called, the Sons of God, hearing the sound of music, and the noise of festivity in the valley below, agreed for once to descend from their mountain, and partake of the amusement. On their arrival, they were so delighted with the novelty of the scene, and so captivated with the beauty of the women, who appeared naked, that they yielded to their charms, and defiled

Debauchery
of the race of
Cain.

* This tradition does not agree with the banishment of Cain, as mentioned by Moses.

them-

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themselves with them: having gone this length, it was not likely they should stop on the very threshold of pleasure: accordingly, returning from time to time to visit these women, they at last ventured to intermarry with them; and hence, probably, arose the story of the commerce between the Sons of God, and the Daughters of Men: a story which gave birth to an opinion, that by the Sons of God were meant Angels, who had so far deviated from the dignity of their incorporeal and celestial nature, as to debase themselves by a carnal knowledge of terrestrial women. To this absurd and ridiculous notion, no little strength has been added by a forgery, called the Prophecy of Enoch; a prophecy, which, like too many others, is long obscure and unintelligible*; evident marks of its not having been dictated by that divine spirit, who is light and perspicuity.

BUT though we cannot positively ascertain the precise meaning of Moses, when he says, the Sons of God defiled themselves with the Daughters of Men, we may venture to affirm, that the expres-

* The general purport of this long and ill connected prophecy, is, That in those times, women were so exceedingly beautiful and tempting, that the Egregarii, or guardian angels, who were set to watch over and attend them, being constantly exposed to the whole artillery of their charms, at last fell so violently in love with them, that they disclosed the secret to each other, and entered into an agreement, to take to themselves, from among them, wives of those that were fairest in their eyes. That accordingly, in the year of the world 1170, they began the execution of their project; and in the most daring and flagitious manner continued it to the time of the deluge. That in those days, were born to the angels who had thus married, giants, who devoured human flesh, of which they were so fond, that the race of man began thereby greatly to decrease; that many complaints on this subject having been made to God, he sent four archangels, who bound these angels, who had joined themselves to women, and produced this monstrous progeny, threw them into the great abyss, and afterward sent Gabriel, another archangel, to root out and destroy the giant.—Other oriental traditions relate, that it was the rebel angels, who had taken arms against Omnipotence, that first began this infamous converse with mortal women, from whence sprung a race of monsters and demons inimical to virtue and to man; and who, by their continued crimes, at last provoked the Almighty to sweep them from the face of the earth by an universal deluge.

sion was made use of to characterise some peculiar species of wickedness, which, with other debaucheries, had become so enormous, that the Author of Nature is said to have repented that he had made man; almost the whole race of whom he was obliged to destroy by the flood, in order that he might raise up a new and more perfect generation; which could not have been done, had the wicked been left to have mixed with and contaminated the righteous.

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FROM the flood, there is a chasm in the history of women till the time of the patriarch Abraham, when they began to be more frequently introduced into the sacred story, several of their actions to be recorded; the laws, customs, and usages by which they were governed to be exhibited: all of which, joined to some anecdotes of their public and private life, enable us to give a more perfect account of the ancient Israelitish women, than can be given of those of any other nation, till we come to the Greeks. In exhibiting this account, we have, however, judged it proper, not to take the incidents in the order in which they are related, but to reduce them under different heads, for the sake of method and regularity.

Chasm in the
history of the
sex.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

*Of Female Education.*C H A P.
II.

IF we can form any idea of the general state of mankind in the infancy of the world, from the state in which they appear in the infancy of every nation, we may suppose that they were originally destitute of every thing which depends on civilization and society, and of almost every species of knowledge, but that of procuring a precarious subsistence from the rivers and forests around them.

Obstructions
to education
in the early
ages.

NECESSARILY impelled to employ the greatest part of their time in this manner, they would have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination, to cultivate their minds. The inhabitants of the woods, and of the waves, were only to be caught by force or fraud: in either of which ways, strong exertions, or long and painful watchings, were requisite; and to these exertions, and other efforts, the constant calls of nature for sustenance kept up an unremitted attention: hence it would be long before the human mind began to extend its ideas beyond that circle which had been formed by necessity, and continued by custom; that course of study and of discipline, that application to various languages and arts, which we now call education, was then totally unknown; and in after ages only sprung up by degrees, according as incidents gave occasion to thinking on new projects, and acting in new employments.

A CON-

A CONSIDERABLE part of education is the study of languages ; but as all mankind spoke originally the same, this laborious part had then no existence. When a diversity of tongues were introduced, what little communication and commerce was then carried on, could not be properly managed unless the parties understood one another : and hence the first efforts to study languages. In some of the milder climates of Asia, the earth spontaneously yielded as much food as simple unpampered nature required ; and the inhabitants supinely enjoyed her gifts, without troubling themselves with painful exertions of mind or of body : but when the human race had multiplied so much, that they were obliged to disperse themselves into climates less indulgent, exertion became necessary to procure food, and invention to remedy the inconveniencies, and provide against the accidents, of climate and situation : thus in Egypt, the annual inundations of the Nile obliged them to raise houses on pillars, and to apply to Astronomy, that they might know the seasons when these inundations were to come upon them. The rigour of seasons, in places more remote from the sun, obliged them to cover themselves with skins, and to build houses : and the same cause, perhaps, at first, gave birth to the use of fire. Were we thus to trace almost every human invention to its source, we should generally find that source to have been necessity.

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II.Source of
education.

IN the patriarchal ages, and some time after, even among people considerably removed from barbarity, we have hardly the least vestige of education among the men*, and would therefore in vain look for it among the women. In climates where the spon-

Progress of
education and
arts.

* Schools where men were taught the arts of prophesying and of magic, were, probably, the first that were instituted ; the former appear to have been erected by the Israelites, the latter by the Egyptians or Phœnicians.

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II.

taneous productions of the earth were few, and where men were become too numerous to be maintained by hunting and fishing, necessity would stimulate to pasturage, and perhaps to some rude efforts in agriculture; but as these could not be carried on without some kind of instruments, it was possibly to furnish such, that Tubal Cain began first to work in iron and in brass. Such rude instruments as he at first constructed, might upon trial suggest to him the improvements necessary for making others more adapted to the purpose: and these again, might lead on to works of fancy, which were probably the first exercises which opened and expanded the powers of the human mind, giving birth to carving and gilding, and several other works of taste, which the Israelites had carried to no inconsiderable degree of perfection in the time of Solomon; and even to chymistry, of which Moses must have had no incompetent skill to enable him to stamp the golden calf to powder. Into such exercises and trades, were the men, in the times we are speaking of, initiated; but it is in vain that we endeavour to discover what was taught to the women: whether they were regularly instructed in any thing, or left to learn what they could from nature, or from chance; which last we are inclined to think was the case, as writing and reading were not then invented; as the sciences were but few, and these few only in their infancy; and as women were not valued for any mental qualifications, but only for their personal charms.

Of the Egyp-
tians.

OF all the nations which present themselves in the periods we are considering, the Egyptians most deservedly claim our attention; as it was from them that we derived the first principles of all our arts, sciences, and cultivation. It was the Egyptians who first taught the rude and uninstructed Greeks: the Greeks trans-
mitted

mitted their knowledge to the Romans: and the Romans carried C H A P.
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— their knowledge, and their chains, over half the globe. In whatever light we view the Egyptians, they do more honour to human nature than any of the ancients, as they excelled them all in laws, in arts, and in government; sciences in which they believed, or pretended to believe, they had been improving themselves during a period of no less than one hundred thousand years; though this must undoubtedly appear fabulous, it is certain that they were allowed by most of the ancients, to have been one of the first people who were civilized and formed into a nation governed by laws, mostly founded on equity and wisdom; in short they were, even in the distant periods we are speaking of, a people not much inferior to many of those which in our times make no despicable figure in the present civilized system of Europe.

It is among the Egyptians only, that, in the periods under review, we meet with any thing resembling a system of study and education; their magicians, in whom most of their learning centered, studied, and taught, such sciences as were then known; the most distinguished of which was Astronomy, from which, it appears, that women were not altogether excluded; for we are told that Athyrte, the daughter of Sesostris, encouraged her father to undertake his chimerical scheme of conquering the world, by assuring him of success, from her divinations, from her dreams in the temples, and from the prodigies she had seen in the air. Almost every writer on ancient Egypt mentions, that the women managed the greatest part of such business as was transacted without doors, and that the commerce of the nation was peculiarly allotted to them; it is therefore highly probable, that they were taught the use of numbers and figures, as far as they were then

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known : a science without the use of which trade must have been exceedingly imperfect and irregular. As writing also was known at an early period in Egypt, and as it is hardly less necessary in commerce than the use of figures, it is probable also, that the women were taught the writing then in use. As the softness and sentimental feelings of the female heart seem excellently adapted to the soothing strains of music, music has therefore been a part of the education of the sex from the remotest ages of antiquity : Moses frequently mentions singing men and singing women, and we shall afterwards meet with singing women among a variety of the nations we shall have occasion to mention. The Egyptians, however, were in this respect singular ; the same reason which determined other nations to teach women that pleasing art, determined the Egyptians to debar them from it * ; because, said they, it softens and relaxes the mind. But when we recollect what we just now related of the employment of women, it will in a great measure elucidate this singularity : it was probably the opinion of the legislature, that too much softness and delicacy would disqualify them for managing the affairs of trade and commerce ; and that though a certain softness of the sex was encouraged in all other countries, it would but ill have suited the Egyptian women, who were generally occupied in such employments as were every where else destined to the men. However this be, when we survey the accounts given us by the ancients, of the arts, sciences, laws ; and, above all, of the culture, and wisdom of the Egyptians ; when we consider the high estimation, in which women were held, and the powers with which they were invested ; when, to these, we add the literary fame of the nation, we have the

* Herodotus, and some other authors, doubt whether the Egyptians prohibited their women from learning music.

strongest

strongest reasons to conclude, that though we are at this period unacquainted with their system of female education, it certainly was such as suited the dignity of so wise a people, and of a sex so loved and respected.

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IT is not easy to determine whether the Phœnicians at first borrowed their learning from the Egyptians, but, however that be, they were in the times we are considering, little behind them in knowledge. They cultivated Arithmetic and Astronomy, and applied them to the purposes of trade and navigation. Moschus, a Sydonian, before the Trojan war, taught the philosophical doctrine of Atoms; and Abdomeneus of Tyre undertook to dispute with Solomon, king of Israel; in those days reckoned the most redoubtable champion of learning and of wisdom. Tyre and Sydon were at this time renowned for the sciences and for philosophy.

Of the Phœnicians.

MAN, in his rude and uncultivated state, forms his connections with woman from a regard to the beauty of her person only; when he becomes civilized, he regards the qualities of her mind, as well as the charms of her body. We can hardly therefore suppose, that the Phœnicians; a people, who in commerce and navigation excelled all others, and were second to none in politeness and learning; would totally neglect to instil into the minds of their women, any of that knowledge which was in so much national esteem and veneration; but we only offer this as conjecture, as the history of these people is entirely silent on the subject: and indeed history in general throws but a faint gleam of light on the ages under review; which, among many other reasons, may in part be owing to that peace and quiet which we may suppose

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suppose the world then enjoyed for many ages; for history passes in silence over whole centuries of peace, and takes notice only of wars, conquests, and revolutions; as if nothing were worthy of the ear of posterity, but the crimes and follies of their ancestors.

Ancient State
of Europe.

WHAT we have observed of the Phœnicians, may, in a great measure, be equally applied to the Babylonians; they are acknowledged by all antiquity, to have been the first who made use of writing in their public and judicial acts; but though the exact period in which they began this invention is not known, we are nevertheless certain, that they were early distinguished for their politeness and learning. We shall have occasion afterwards, to relate the care and pains they took in adorning the persons of their women; from which we may conclude, that they did not leave their minds without cultivation and improvement. The nations which were contemporary with, or for several ages succeeded to those we have now mentioned, were, when compared to them, as the rest of the world now is, when compared to Europe; hardly just entering on the threshold of knowledge: and Europe, which now appears with such distinguished lustre, was then involved in ignorance and barbarity; nor had its scattered and wretched inhabitants discovered any symptoms of that genius which now eclipses all other countries. It was by some colonies from Asia, that the sciences were first introduced among them. And such is the fate of human affairs, that from the time these sciences were first transplanted, they seemed to abandon their native soil, and attach themselves entirely to Europe. The Asiatics either lost their taste for them, or, in prosecuting them, had already exhausted their utmost powers; the Europeans acquired that

that taste, and continue still to cultivate and extend it, by stretches of genius and invention, to which no limits can be fixed.

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WHEN, from Europe, we again return to the East, we cannot help lamenting, that antiquity has hardly left us any traces of the manner in which their women were educated; and it is from scattered hints only, that we can discover any thing concerning them. One of these hints informs us, that some of the nations whom Cyrus conquered had taught their women music; for Cyrus gave two female musicians, who were his captives, as a present to his uncle Cyaxares; and female as well as male musicians were in those times frequently retained by the great to amuse them in their hours of relaxation and festivity, by their skill in playing upon such instruments as were then in use, by the melody of their voices, and by the various gestures which they practised in dancing. If, in the times we are considering, the plan of female education comprehended any thing farther, we may suppose that it took in only such other arts of attraction as the eastern women have always been famous for, and which the men have always regarded as their principal qualification. In a few cases, however, it is probable, they were instructed in some of the useful learning of the times; for the education of the children of the kings of the Medes and Persians was for many ages committed to the women. Dejoces, their first king, began the custom; and it was continued till some ages after the reign of Cyrus, and is at this day practised in many places of the East. As these young monarchs were entirely entrusted to the care of women till the age of fifteen or sixteen, one would naturally conclude, that the women must have been capable of teaching, at least a part of, the fashionable learning of the times: but if it was the same among the ancient Medes and Persians,

Of some other
ancient na-
tions.

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fians, as it is now among their descendants, they were not capable of doing so ; for the education which the young eastern princes at present receive from their women, is little else than the first principles of effeminacy and debauchery, with hardly even a small tincture of that learning bestowed on their subjects : and hence so many of the eastern monarchs dedicate their lives to cruelty and debauchery. Even Cyrus himself, though trained up in a better manner, and almost in every respect superior to the herd of eastern monarchs, stained his memory with the foulest infamy, by perverting the education of the Lydians, for no other crime than endeavouring to regain their liberty, of which he had unjustly deprived them. Cyrus had intrusted the gold which he had found in the treasury of Cræsus king of Lydia, to Pactyas, one of his favourites ; who seeing himself master of so much wealth, thought he could not better employ it, than in instigating the Lydians to place him at their head, and shake off the yoke of the conqueror. Cyrus, in revenge, determined to carry off the whole of the people, and sell them for slaves ; a resolution which he made known to Cræsus, his prisoner ; who fearing the utter destruction of his country, advised Cyrus only to take vengeance on Pactyas ; and in order to prevent any future attempt of the same nature, to forbid the Lydians the use of arms, and oblige them to be educated in the most debauched and effeminate manner. Cyrus followed this advice, and the Lydians soon became the most infamous and abandoned people in the world. History affords but too many examples of monarchs, and of parents, having winked at the improper education of their subjects and children : this is the only instance where the source of every virtue was avowedly contaminated by public authority ; an instance in which we are at a loss to deter-

mine, whether the character of Cyrus, or of Cræsus, appears the most despicable and infamous.

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WERE we to indulge in idle speculation; were we to form conjectures without proper authority to support them; we might relate many plausible opinions concerning the education of women among the ancients; but as the subject, from the time of the Egyptians and some other nations we have mentioned, to those of Greece and Rome, is involved in the gloom of obscurity, we rather chuse to pass over it in silence, than to hazard opinions, when we are uncertain whether the scale of probability preponderates for or against them.

WE shall see afterward, when we come to treat of the rank and condition of women, that in Greece, even in its most flourishing and cultivated state, they were little better than slaves: nor indeed was it possible, that they could in any place ever arrive at that importance seemingly designed them by nature, while their genius was not cultivated, nor their latent qualities called forth into view. Other qualities, such as beauty, and the art of shewing it to advantage, may, in these moments when the heart is softened by love, or the spirits elevated by wine, give to the women a temporary ascendancy over the men, and enable them to bend them at pleasure; as in the case of Thais and Alexander. Such an ascendancy, however, is commonly but fleeting and transient; cool reason soon resumes the place which passion had usurped, and the empire which had been built on passion, tumbles like the baseless fabric of a vision; while that which is supported by education and sense, stands the test of time, and the various incidents of life. It is, however, to be lamented, that a proper education has seldom fallen to the lot of women; even in the politest coun-

Of the Greek
women.

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tries, it is either too much neglected, or conducted on a frivolous and mistaken plan. The education of the Greek women, during what are called the heroic ages *, seems to have been of this nature ; for we find Peleus, in the *Andromache* of Euripides, reproaching Menelaus, father of the famous Helen, for being the occasion of the dissolute conduct of that lady, by the bad education he had given her : nor have we reason to believe, that in those times bad education was confined to this single instance only, but rather that it was a general evil, and never after properly remedied ; a conjecture which the subsequent history of Greece will but too amply verify.

Education of
ancient wo-
men not cal-
culated to
cultivate their
minds.

THERE is not a subject which ancient history takes less notice of, than that of education, and particularly of the education of women. In early periods, and among uncultivated people, the sex do not seem to have been of consequence enough to employ the attention of the public, nor the pen of the historian : a few sketches of the plan of education settled by Solon, the famous Athenian lawgiver, are the most ancient that have been handed down to our times ; and they serve to corroborate an opinion, which we have always entertained, that the education of the ancients was more directed to improve the body than the mind. Solon ordained, that youth in general should be first taught to swim, and to imbibe the rudiments of literature ; that the poor should be instructed in trades, mechanic arts, and agriculture ; but that such as could afford a genteel education should learn to play on musical instruments, to ride, to hunt, and be expert in every kind of exercise ; to all which they were to add the study of

* Several of the first ages, during the infancy of the Grecian states, were called heroic ; because then the men dedicated almost the whole of their time to feats of heroism and of arms.

philosophy. Such was his system of male education; a system more calculated to strengthen the body than to cultivate the mind. Such gleanings of his female system as have reached our times, are still more extraordinary: young women were ordered to exercise themselves in running, wrestling, throwing quoits, darts, and other masculine amusements; which must have tended in the strongest manner to destroy every seed of delicacy that nature had implanted in the female mind; and which, in all probability, gave birth to that boldness and effrontery, for which the Athenian women at last were so remarkable.

If Solon, in his scheme of legislation, instituted that any culture should be bestowed on the female mind, such institutions have not reached to our times: and when we consider how the Greek women were treated, and that healthful and robust bodies were reckoned their chief qualification, as enabling them to give strong and healthful children to the state; we have reason to believe, that no such institutions ever existed. Lycurgus, the no less famous Spartan legislator, seems to have thought women almost below his notice: nor need we wonder at this, when we consider, that his sole intention, and the constant scope of all his laws, was to divest mankind of all that was implanted in them by nature; and, upon the principles of art, to form a race of heroes, who should be insensible to every feeling but the love of their country. Women, he found, were but ill calculated for this purpose: patriotism is a principle seldom so strong in them as in men, and humanity is generally much stronger: the acuteness of their feelings made them less able to bear all the pains and difficulties of eradicating whatever is natural, and the weakness of their bodies disqualified them for becoming heroines: they were therefore unfit subjects for carrying the ideas of Lycurgus into execution; and on that ac-

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count, it seems probable, he gave himself little other trouble about them, than to take care that their company should neither effeminate nor debauch his men.

Their minds
almost totally
neglected.

THAT the Grecian women had not the least tincture of polite education, even in the most flourishing periods of their states, appears from the respect and esteem, which public prostitutes acquired, merely by having the advantage over them in this accomplishment. We shall have occasion to mention this subject afterwards; and therefore at present shall only observe, that many of the greatest of their philosophers publicly visited these prostitutes, and even sometimes carried their wives to be instructed by their lessons. Besides what we have already mentioned, we find that a few of the Greek women were instructed in music; and that such only were admitted to some of their public feasts; their mothers, or other female relations, also taught them the common female employments and customs of their country, and instilled into the minds of such as would receive it, a tincture of that Stoical pride and heroism for which their men were so much renowned: in every thing else, they were miserably deficient, and their constant confinement, to their want of education, added want of knowledge of the world; so that on the whole, never were women found so ignorant in a nation so much famed for knowledge.

Of the Roman
women.

IF we except the Egyptians, the whole history of antiquity exhibits to us a scene in which we find women groaning under the hard hand of oppression, deprived of many of the rights of nature; and till we arrive at the Romans, never attaining to any natural or political consequence. In Rome, however, we find them not only emerging from slavery, but starting up at once into

real importance. In the earlier periods of this great republic, the Romans had but few laws, and no intercourse but with rude and ferocious neighbours like themselves: hence the only education of men was that of war, rigid œconomy, and inflexible patriotism; which are all virtues of necessity in the infancy of almost every state. The education of the women consisted in learning the duties and employments of domestic life; such as cookery, spinning, weaving, and sewing; which were taught them by their mothers or relations. In those days, children were not suckled in the hut of a mercenary nurse, but by the chaste mother who bore them; their education, during nonage, was in her hands; and it was her chief care to instil into them every virtuous principle: in her presence, every loose word, or improper action, were strictly prohibited; she superintended not only their serious studies, but even their amusements, which were always conducted with decency and moderation. But by degrees, as the Romans became rich with the plunder of their neighbours, as the taste for the arts and sciences became more general, the education of the women began to be extended on a larger scale; and to the domestic duties, taught them by their mothers, were added such parts of polite education, as were thought necessary for cultivating their minds: this education we know, from the story of Virginea, they received at public schools; where sciences and literature, no longer confined to rigid philosophers only, began to assume a softer form, and to suit themselves to female talents and genius.

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It has long been alleged by the men, that the women, when learned, are generally pedants; how far this opinion is just, we shall not pretend to determine; but should it really be so, we may naturally enough account for it: the knowledge of women, in general,

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general, is much less extensive than that of the men ; on this account, when any individual among them finds that she is possessed of a considerable share of knowledge, she considers herself as thereby so much elevated above the rest of her sex, that she cannot help taking every opportunity of shewing this elevation.

JUVENAL exhibits some of the Roman ladies of his time in this light: “ They fall, says he, on the praises of Virgil; they weigh in the same balance the merit of that poet and of Homer; they find excuses for Dido’s having stabbed herself, and determine of the beautiful, and of the sovereign good.” Whether the satire here exhibited be true or false, it affords a proof, that, in the days of this poet, learning was not neglected by the women of Rome: but this is not the only proof we can bring to support this fact; others are frequently to be met with in the Roman history. Cicero mentions, with encomiums, several ladies, whose taste in eloquence and philosophy did honour to their sex; and Quintilian, with no small applause, has quoted some of the letters of Cornelia; besides which, we have fortunately a speech of Hortensia preserved by Appian; which for elegance of language, and justness of thought, would have done honour to a Cicero, or a Demosthenes *. What gave occasion to the speech was,

• The unhappy women you see here imploring your justice and bounty, would never have presumed to appear in this place, had they not first made use of all other means, which their natural modesty could suggest to them. Though our appearing here may seem contrary to the rules of decency prescribed to our sex, which we have hitherto observed with all strictness; yet the loss of our father’s children, brothers, and husbands, may sufficiently excuse us, especially when their unhappy deaths are made a pretence for our further misfortunes: you pretend that they had offended and provoked you, but what injury have we women done, that we must be impoverished? if we are blameable as the men, why do you not proscribe us too? have we declared you enemies to your country? have we suborned your soldiers? raised troops against you, or opposed you in the pursuits of those honours and offices which you claim?

was, the Triumvirs of Rome wanting a large sum of money for carrying on a war, and having met with great difficulties in raising it, they drew up a list of fourteen hundred of the richest of the ladies, whom they intended to tax. These ladies, after having in vain tried every method to evade so great an innovation, at last having chosen Hortensia for their speaker, went along with her to the market-place, where she addressed the Triumvirs, while they were administering justice. The Triumvirs being offended at the boldness of the women, ordered them to be driven away; but the populace growing tumultuous, they were afraid of an insurrection; and reduced the list of women to be taxed to four hundred.

As we do not propose to write the history of learned women, but only to give a general detail of the care bestowed on the education of that sex; we return to observe, that the Romans were at great pains in teaching their young men. Those who could afford it, commonly kept in their own houses preceptors to instruct them; those who could not, sent them to public schools, where

claim? We pretend not to govern the republic, nor is it our ambition which has drawn the present misfortune on our heads; empire, dignities, and honours are not for us; why should we then contribute to a war in which we have no manner of interest? It is true, indeed, that in the Carthaginian war, our mothers assisted the republic, which was, at that time, reduced to the utmost distress; but neither their houses, their lands, nor their moveables, were sold for that service; some rings and a few jewels furnished the supply; nor was it constraint, nor violence, that forced these from them: what they contributed was the voluntary offering of generosity. What danger at present threatens Rome? If the Gauls, or Parthians, were encamped on the banks of the Tiber, or the Anio, you should find us not less zealous in the defence of our country than our mothers were before us; but it becomes not us, and we are resolved that we will not be any way concerned in civil war. Neither Marius, nor Cæsar, nor Pompey, ever thought of obliging us to take part in the domestic troubles which their ambition had raised; nay, nor did even Sylla himself, who first let us tyranny in Rome; and yet you assume the glorious title of Reformers of the State! a title which will turn to your eternal infamy; if, without the least regard to the laws or equity, you persist in your wicked resolution of plundering those of their lives and fortunes, who have given you no just cause of offence.

they

C H A P. II. they were generally instructed by Grecian masters: besides these methods, such fathers as were capable, taught their own children, not only the literature of the times, but also morality, and their duty to their country. Cato instructed his son in such a variety of arts and exercises, as seem almost improbable; and Augustus, though sovereign of the world, taught his grandchildren to write. When such were the teachers, when such the love of learning, we may assure ourselves that women, who had now attained no small importance, were not neglected: and it is probable, from that greatness of mind, which many of them in a variety of instances displayed, that their education had always a tendency, not only to inspire them with sentiments of morality, but likewise with that inflexible constancy and firmness of mind, so exceedingly necessary in a state, whose agitations and convulsions were so frequent, that every member stood in need of the utmost fortitude to sustain the shock.

SUCH a mode of education, however, we imagine, was counteracting nature, and robbing the sex of that softness, and timidity, in which consists half their charms; and such, though in a few instances it succeeded, never had any general influence; for the Roman women, though they boasted while in security of all the heroism of their husbands, were in such a consternation when Hannibal approached the gates of Rome, that they were forbid to appear in the streets, lest their cries should dispirit the soldiers, and spread a general panic through the city.

As we are able only to give so imperfect an account of the female education of the Romans, a people whose history we are almost as well acquainted with, as with that of our own times;
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it is not to be expected that we can throw much light upon that subject, among the nations that were contemporary with them, as they were in a state of too much ignorance to have any historical records; and as we have no complete detail of their manners and customs, but only some sketches in Tacitus, and a few of the other Roman writers.

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IF by education we mean the culture of letters, of arts, and of sciences; in vain will we look for it among the ancient inhabitants of the North. The Scandinavians, and other tribes, who, in those times, possessed the greatest part of Europe, were hardly acquainted with the slightest rudiments of literature, or of science*. In the savage state in which they were, no ideas are entertained of the necessity, or utility, of any thing but what immediately contributes to the sustenance or clothing of the body; no honour to procuring these, by any other methods, than rapine and plunder; hence their men were trained to gaining their subsistence by feats of arms, and wasting it in thoughtless festivity. Their women, who frequently accompanied the men in their plundering expeditions, and who besides had every labour and drudgery to perform, could not have much time for attaining knowledge; as they were not, however, always of these parties, but sometimes left at home; if there was any glimmerings of knowledge; if there was any wisdom, it was mostly to be found among them; and they acquired it, not by a laborious course of education, but by experience and reflection upon the contingencies which happened in these hours of solitude, when the human mind is most susceptible of instruction.

Women of
the northern
nations, how
educated.

* Such is the case at this time with the Druses; they reckon learning one of those low and contemptible acquisitions only fit for women.

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WHAT they had thus learned, of arts, of improvements, or œconomy, they taught to their daughters; hence women were generally more enlightened than men; and hence also they acquired an extraordinary degree of esteem, and were often consulted as oracles. Besides the few arts and domestic occupations known among a people so rude and simple, the mothers also exerted themselves in teaching their daughters the virtues of prudence and chastity; which they did no less by example than by precept; and both being united, had so happy an effect, that the ancient Scandinavian women were not only among the first who attained to that esteem due to their sex, but who laid the foundation of that honour and regard, which Europe at present pays as a tribute to beauty and merit.

Effects of
chivalry.

DURING the long and successful reign of chivalry in Europe; as women were the constant object of romantic heroism and extravagant adoration, we may naturally conclude, that their education tended chiefly to enable them to shew themselves in such a manner, as to excite heroes to fight for, and lovers to adore them. Even so late as the beginning of the fourteenth century, there was hardly any learning among the men; the Greek was so entirely neglected, that the celebrated Petrarch could not in Italy, nor France, find one person capable of instructing him in it: the Latin was known in a rude and imperfect manner only to a few; and hardly was there to be found a woman, who could read the language of her own country; and if such a one was here and there to be met with, she was reckoned a kind of prodigy.

WHEN the men, who before had spent their days in tournaments and feats of arms, began to turn their attention towards the
arts

arts of peace, the women were likewise laid under the necessity of varying their mode of education; as they found that the same arts which effectually captivated a knight clad in armour and ignorance, were in vain practised upon the enlightened scholar and philosopher. Ambitious still to retain the power they already possessed, and conscious that the way to please the men was to seem fond of what they approved of, and dislike what they disliked; they applied themselves to letters and to philosophy, hoping to keep possession by their talents, of what they had gained by their charms. Though these measures were not calculated to inspire love, and attract the heart, and consequently did not produce the effects which the ladies intended, yet they raised them in that period to a pitch of learning, unknown in any other. They preached in public, supported controversies, published and defended Theses's, filled the chairs of philosophy and law, harangued the popes in Latin, wrote Greek, and read Hebrew: nuns became poetesses, women of quality divines, and young girls, with a softness of eloquent enthusiasm, publicly exhorted the Christian princes to take up arms for the recovery of the Holy Land. The learned languages were now considered as indispensably necessary; they were taught not only to men, but to women of almost all ranks and conditions; who, not content with Latin only, often read the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New in Greek. In this manner was female genius turned into a wrong channel; it was diverted from the duties of domestic life; it was either soured by study, or rendered petulant by learning; and while it acquired empty words and false philosophy, it lost much of its native sprightliness, and became daily more an object of admiration, and less an object of love.

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Reverse of
this picture.

IT has been often observed, that violent exertions of mind, as well as of body, constantly leave a languor behind them, in proportion to the efforts that have been made. This was remarkably the case with female literature; every mental power had been for a long time over-stretched, and the greatest relaxation soon followed of consequence: from their knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; from their skill in the empty disputations of Aristotelian philosophy, and of divinity, women began at last to discover, that they acquired only an empty fame; and that in proportion as they gained the esteem of the head, they became less objects of the heart. On this discovery, it was necessary for them to change their plan; they therefore began by degrees to abandon learning, and attach themselves again to those female arts, which were more likely to be productive of love, than of fame and applause.

Further re-
volutions.

WHILE this change of female manners was taking place, the greatest part of Europe exhibited a scene of seeming inconsistency; enthusiasm and gallantry, religion and licentiousness, were constantly practised by the same persons, and seemed as if perfectly reconciled to each other. Learning, however, declined so fast, that in a short time women became as famous for ignorance of their own language, as they had been formerly for their knowledge of others; insomuch, that during a great part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was hardly a woman to be found in the politest countries of Europe, who could dictate a tolerable letter in her own tongue, or spell it with decent propriety: the only little reading which they at this period commonly concerned themselves with, was a few receipts in cookery to bring on, and a few receipts in physic to take off diseases;
together

together with the wrangling and unintelligible theology of the times; a science to which women of all ages and countries have been peculiarly addicted, as it greatly interests their passions; and, perhaps, consoles them in the many solitary moments in which they are left alone, and as it were excluded from business and from the world. But even these favourite studies, and every other part of female amusement and œconomy, not being sufficient to fill up all their vacant hours, they now applied themselves assiduously to various kinds of needle-work; and many women of the first rank were themselves taught, and instructed their daughters in, the arts of flowering and embroidery; which they practised so well in their leisure hours, that much of the furniture of their houses was decorated in this manner with their own hands.

AFTER the discovery and conquest of America, immense treasures had been constantly imported from thence into Europe. From the trade carried on to the East and West Indies, to Africa, and other parts of the globe, perhaps still greater wealth had been accumulated; these at last beginning to operate, turned the minds of the greatest part of Europe from that sober and œconomical plan of life, to which their poverty and imperfect knowledge of trade and agriculture had subjected them; and substituted in its place, gaiety, expence, and parade. Numbers of people, who, perhaps, not in the most rigid paths of justice, had acquired immense fortunes in the East; transported themselves back to Europe, bringing along with them all the arrogance of wealth, effeminacy of manners, and love of pageantry and show, for which the eastern nations have ever been remarkable. These, and several other causes combining together, totally changed the manners
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of Europe; and instead of sober frugality, and other domestic virtues of the women, introduced luxury and dissipation; with a taste for all the tinsel glare of unsubstantial trifles.

THE French, who have always been remarkably distinguished for vivacity and show, took the lead in this new mode of life, and soon disseminated it all over Europe; which, for at least these two centuries past, has awkwardly imitated every light fashion and frippery of that volatile people, with little better success than a Bear dances a hornpipe, or a Monkey puts on the gravity of an alderman.

French ladies,
their educa-
tion.

IN France, were women first introduced to court; their education, which before that introduction, consisted in reading their own language, in learning needle-work, and the offices of domestic life, was then by degrees changed to vocal and instrumental music, drawing, dancing, and dressing in the most fashionable manner; to which we may add, the art of captivating and governing their men. This flimsy pattern was copied by every other nation: some strokes of improvement were from time to time added by the French; till at last almost every thing useful was boldly struck out from the plan of female education; and the women of the present age thereby robbed of more than half their native excellence, and rendered objects more sought after to divert a melancholy hour, or satisfy a lawless passion, than to become the social partners of a life directed by reason and religion. We must, however, allow, that the French ladies are not all so much devoted to fashion and pleasure, as to neglect every thing else. France has produced several women distinguished for their judgment and learning; and even in the present dissipated age, while

female coteries commonly meet for diversion, or for gaming, there are in Paris societies of women, which meet at stated times to determine the merit of every new work; and happy is the author who meets their approbation; the French being too polite to set themselves in open opposition to the judgment of their ladies, whether they may think it right or wrong.

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SHOULD this imperfect attempt, to write the History of the Fair, survive the present, and be read in any future generation, when this frivolous mode of female education shall have given place to a better, that our readers may then have some idea of what it was towards the close of the eighteenth century, we shall just sketch the outlines of it as now practised in the politest countries of Europe. Among the first lessons, which a mother teaches her daughter, is that important article, according to the modern phrase, of holding up her head, and learning a proper carriage: this begins to be inculcated at the age of three or four at latest; and is strenuously insisted on for many years afterward. When the young lady has learned imperfectly to read her own language, and sometimes even sooner, she is sent to a boarding-school, where she is instructed in the most flimsy and useless parts of needlework; while of those, which she must need, if ever she enters into domestic life, she is left entirely ignorant. While she is here, some part of her time is also allotted to learning to read either her own language, or the languages of some of the neighbouring kingdoms; all of which are too frequently taught without a proper attention to Grammar or Orthography. Writing, and Arithmetic, likewise employ a part of her time; but these, particularly the last, are only considered as auxiliary accomplishments, which

Present mode
of female
education.

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are not to be carried into life, and consequently deserve but little attention; the grand effort is generally made to teach the girl what the woman will relinquish; such as drawing, music, and dancing; these, as they are arts agreeable to youthful sprightliness, often engage the young lady so much, as to make her neglect, or forget every thing else. To these are added, the modes of dressing in fashion, the punctilios of behaving in company; and we are sorry to say, that into some schools have been introduced masters to teach the fashionable games at cards; a dissipation, if not a vice, which already prevails too much among both sexes, and may perhaps still gain ground by this early initiation.

SUCH, in general, is the education of female boarding-schools; in some, indeed, there may be a few other things taught besides those we have mentioned; but whatever be taught, or however they be conducted, it is too true, that the girl, after having been there some years, comes home to her parents quite a modern fine lady; with her head full of scraps of French, names of great people, and quotations from romances and plays; and quite disgusted at the antiquated virtues of sober frugality, order, or œconomy. We cannot cast our eyes on the picture we have now drawn, without a secret wish, that it were less just; nor shall we drop the curtain before it, without mentioning with pleasure, that some parents adopt a better plan; and that some young ladies, even thus educated, have had understanding enough to lay aside the greatest part of the abovementioned frippery, and cultivate such knowledge, and such virtues, as were ornamental to society, and useful to themselves.

SUCH, with a few trifling variations, is the common course of European education; a course, which seems almost entirely calculated to cultivate the personal graces, while the care of the head, and of the heart, is little, if at all, attended to; and the useful duties of domestic life, but too often turned into ridicule, as the obsolete employments of such silly women as lived a century or two ago, unacquainted with fashion and with pleasure. Women so educated, may be sought after to help in trifling away an idle hour; but whatever progress their personal charms may make on the passions, when the hours of trifling and of passion are over, they must infallibly be neglected, if not despised. With the fop and the beau, creatures still more insignificant than themselves, they may perhaps expect a better fate; but let them consider, how little pleasure they generally take in the company and conversation of their own sex; and that the fop, and the beau, are only women in breeches. Let such also, as never entertained an idea but of conquests and admirers, consider, that when youth and beauty shall be no more, when the crowd of flatterers and admirers shall have ceased to attend, something will then be necessary to fill up the void, and prevent the peevishness and disgust which it so often occasions; that the natural source of this something, is friendship; and that friendship cannot exist, unless it is built upon the foundation of reason and of sense.

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II.Reflections
on it.

IF the history of the education of women in Europe, where they are objects so interesting, and so much esteemed by the men, has given but little pleasure in the recital, it will give still less in Asia, Africa, and America, where they are commonly either enslaved or disregarded: in both which cases nothing is so necessary as ignorance; nor would any thing so effectually spoil them

Of the Eastern
women how
educated.

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for their slavery, as education and knowledge; which, by opening and expanding their minds, would soon discover to them, that our sex assumed a power not founded in nature; and treated them with a severity inconsistent with gentleness and humanity: for these reasons, it is the interest of the men, that almost no culture should be bestowed on their minds, lest it should teach them to assert the rights of nature, and refuse to submit to the yoke of bondage.

IN several of the warmer regions of Asia and Africa, where women are considered merely as instruments of animal pleasure, the little education bestowed upon them, is entirely calculated to debauch their minds, and give additional charms to their persons. They are instructed in such graces, and alluring arts, as tend to inflame the passions; they are taught vocal and instrumental music, which they accompany with dances, in which every movement, and every gesture, is expressively indecent: but they receive no moral instruction; for it would teach them that they were doing wrong: no improvement; for it would shew them, that they were degrading themselves, by being only trained up to satisfy the pleasures of sense. This, however, is not the practice of all parts of Asia and Africa: the women of Hindostan are educated more decently; they are not allowed to learn music or dancing; which are only reckoned accomplishments fit for ladies of pleasure: they are, notwithstanding, taught all the personal graces; and particular care is taken to instruct them in the art of conversing with elegance and vivacity: some of them are also taught to write, and the generality to read, that they may be able to read the Koran; instead of which, they more frequently dedicate themselves to tales and romances; which, painted in all
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the lively imagery of the East, seldom fail to corrupt the minds of creatures shut up from the world, and consequently forming to themselves extravagant and romantic notions of all that is transacted in it.

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IN well regulated families, women are taught by heart some prayers in Arabic, which at certain hours they assemble in a hall to repeat; never being allowed the liberty of going to the public mosque. They are enjoined always to wash themselves before praying; and, indeed, the virtues of cleanliness, of chastity, and obedience, are so strongly and constantly inculcated on their minds, that, in spite of their general debauchery of manners, there are not a few among them, who, in their common deportment, do credit to the instructions bestowed upon them; nor is this much to be wondered at, when we consider the tempting recompence that is held out to them; they are, in paradise, to flourish for ever, in the vigour of youth and beauty; and however old, or ugly, when they depart this life, are there to be immediately transformed into all that is fair, and all that is graceful.

IN China, where education is in greater esteem than in any part of the world; where it is almost the only road to preferment, and where the men are consequently at the greatest pains to acquire it, we might naturally expect, that as their women possess a considerable share of esteem and regard, they also should not be neglected in their education: but whether they are even taught to read or write their own language, which is a work of many years, we are not informed by any of the voyages and travels which have fallen within our observation; as the task of learning to read or to write the Chinese language is so long and laborious; and as

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among the men it seems chiefly confined to such as aspire after employments of state, we are of opinion, that women are seldom or never instructed in it. We are told, however, that such as are rich learn music, the modes of behaviour, and ceremonial punctilios of the country; which last they cannot possibly be without; as a failure in the least circumstance, as the number of bows to a superior, or manner of making them, would infallibly stamp the mark of ignorance on the person so failing: women are in general also taught a bashfulness and modesty of behaviour, not to be met with in any other country: this, however, is too often but a semblance; a mere outside of virtue, which the wearer can occasionally put on, or shake off, as she has occasion to appear virtuous, or to yield to the temptations of vice.

African women, their education.

SUCH, with very little variation, is the education of women over all Asia. When we turn towards Africa, we find the men still more brutish and ignorant, and the women consequently more abused and neglected. But however ignorant and brutish the present inhabitants of Africa are, their country was, in the time of the Roman empire, the seat of the sciences, and produced no small number of scholars, as well as heroes. The African love of learning was then so great, that in Egypt a library was collected; which, for its number of books, equalled almost any of our modern times; and, for costliness, much excelled all that we are now acquainted with; being most of them wrote in letters of gold, by dissolving it in some liquid, which, among them, is a peculiar secret, and writing with the solution as we do with ink. When the Turks made themselves masters of Egypt, this famous library was, by superstition, condemned to the flames; avarice, however, a passion much less destructive, saved a part of what superstition

stition had devoted to ruin: the Sultan had ordered all the books [C H A P.
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 to be burned, but such as treated of Mahomedism; the minister, who executed his orders, burned only all that were old and in bad order, saving all the new and elegant, which he privately sold among the officers of the court. Since this period, the faith of Mahomet has spread itself over the greatest part of Africa; literature has daily declined, and, at the present time, almost the whole of its people, of whatever religion, have hardly any vestige of learning, of arts, or of sciences left among them. Agriculture is consigned entirely to the women, and managed in the most rude and slovenly manner; the few trades and arts practised among them, are only the result of necessity, and carried on with a slowness and want of invention, which strongly marks their deficiency of genius.

AMONG people, in such a condition, it would be in vain to expect any female learning; all the care that is taken to instruct that miserable sex, is only in teaching them to bear the load of oppression laid on their shoulders by their lazy and imperious masters, which we shall afterward have occasion to mention; while, from one another, they learn the tawdry modes of dressing and ornamenting themselves as practised in their country. This slavery of the persons of women, and total neglect of their minds, naturally excites our indignation; but to account for it, we must consider, that it has been a custom from the earliest antiquity in these regions; and that custom is stronger than reason and humanity joined together; that the Africans, and even the Mahomedans in Asia and in Europe, never make companions of their women, nor associate with them, but in the moments dedicated to love and dalliance; hence the women have no opportunity of
practising

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 II. } practising upon the men those arts, by which, in other countries,
 they gain an ascendancy over the heart, and interest even reason,
 as well as humanity, in their favour.

Of the Ame-
 rican women.

THE education of the various tribes of savages, who inhabit the vast continent of America, seems in general better adapted to their mode of life than that of Europe; the whole scope of it being well calculated to make them patient of every possible evil and suffering, which may befall them in the course of a life destined almost to one continued scene of dangers and fatigues: nor is this plan of education confined to boys only; it is extended to girls also, who are taught to bear the rigors of the climate, the fatigues of labour, the cravings of extreme hunger, and other vicissitudes of fortune, not only with patience, but with resolution and fortitude. In a great part of North America, it is a fundamental rule in education, never to beat their children of either sex; which, say they, would only weaken and dispirit their minds, without producing any good effects; and, therefore, whenever a mother sees her daughter behave ill, instead of having recourse to the rod, she falls a crying; the daughter naturally enquires the cause; the mother answers, because you disgrace me; a reproach which seldom fails to produce an amendment; but, should it happen otherwise, the mother, as a last resource, throws a little water on her face; a disgrace with which she is commonly so much affected, that she seldom ventures to do any thing that may subject her to a repetition of it.

In Japan, the same gentleness must be used in the education of children; the punishments inflicted in most other nations, only make them more stubborn and refractory; and sometimes there,

as well as in America, have drove them to commit suicide; a crime to which the Japanese are addicted on the most trifling affront; and which the Americans coolly and deliberately perpetrate, when tired of life. This stubbornness of temper is not peculiar to Japan, or to America; it seems either to depend on savageness of manners, or perhaps to be peculiar to some distinct kinds of the human race; as we may find it also in Greenland, and several other places; even where the people have but little resemblance to each other in manners, customs, or disposition.

OF all the ancient inhabitants of America, the Peruvians seem to have been the most enlightened; it has been supposed, that this was owing to their first Inca being an European, accidentally shipwrecked on their coast. However this be, it is certain, that they greatly surpassed all their countrymen in arts, in manners, and even in learning; their Virgins of the Sun, in particular, were brought up in the temple dedicated to that luminary, with great care; and instructed by women, appointed for the purpose, in every female art and accomplishment known among them; and in the practice of the virtues of chastity, honesty, and benevolence; virtues for which the ancient Peruvians were eminently distinguished. In Mexico, also, their young women of quality were educated by matrons, who overlooked their conduct with great circumspection. From these instances it appears, that in South America, where they enjoy a milder climate, whose spontaneous productions preclude the necessity of procuring subsistence by the perilous occupations of fishing and hunting, their education too, is of a softer nature than in North America; where tenderness would effectually disqualify them for bearing the fatigues of their occupation, and the severities of their climate. But
while

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while the North Americans educate their young women in the hardy manner we have mentioned, they seem at the same time to blend this education in such a manner, as if they would wish to throw into the female composition, some of that softness of manners and person, which men in all ages and nations have at least had some faint ideas of in the other sex. While their male children are young, they lay them on the skins of panthers, that they may thereby acquire the strength, cunning, and agility of that animal. Their females they lay on the skins of fawns, and other mild animals, that, like them, they may become soft, gentle, and engaging.

Reflections
on the edu-
cation of wo-
men.

WHEN we take a retrospective view of these sketches of the education of women, it affords matter of astonishment, that a sex, who are the sharers of our nature, and destined to be the companions of our lives, should have been constantly either shamefully neglected, or perverted by what was meant to serve as instruction. In Europe, their education seems only calculated to inspire them with love of admiration, of trifling, and of amusement. In most other places of the globe, it goes a step farther; it tends to eradicate every moral sentiment, and introduce vice dressed up in the garb of voluptuous refinement. Scarcely has there ever appeared in any period, or in any nation, a legislator, who has made it the subject of his serious attention; and the men in general, who are greatly interested, that women should be sensible and virtuous, seem, by their conduct towards that sex, to have entered into a conspiracy to render them otherways.

WHEN such is the hard fate of women, we cannot wonder that the want of literary knowledge has in all ages marked the female character :

character: there has, however, in all ages, and among all nations, been some particular women, who either by being endowed with more genius, or by turning it into another channel, have acquired no incompetent share of the learning of the times in which they lived; thus, though we have already seen that the Greek women were in general extremely ignorant, there were some exceptions to that common character. Arete, the daughter of Aristippus, taught philosophy, and the sciences, to her son; who, on that account, was called Metrodidas; i. e. taught by his mother. Corinna, a Theban poetess, no less than five times bore away the palm in triumph from the celebrated Pindar; and Aspasia, a noble Milesian lady, instructed Pericles, the famous Athenian philosopher. We have already mentioned some of the learned Roman ladies. France and England have had a Dacier, a Carter, and many others too tedious to mention. In Italy, where poets, a few centuries ago, were revered as divinities, several women have arrived at no mean degree of reputation in that art; and our own times have seen the ceremony of a poetess being solemnly crowned with laurel at Rome.

THESE particular instances, however, have no influence on the women in general. A genius of either sex, will infallibly soar above the common level; but the herd of mankind, who feel not the same impulse, nor are actuated by the same fire, will still jog on in the ordinary track; while our warmest wishes are, that female education were an object more considered by the legislature, and better planned by parents and guardians. We would not have it understood as our opinion, that women should pore out their fair eyes in becoming adepts in literature. Nature seems not

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to have intended them for the more intense and severe studies ; besides, should they proceed so far as to rival, or even to equal us in learning, we should perhaps grudge them the laurels of fame, as much as we do the breeches : and the gaining of these laurels would rob their brows of many of those charms, which to them are more valuable, as they are by us more esteemed. We pretend not to chalk out the plan in which women should be educated ; only, this we venture to affirm, that it should, if possible, be such as to avoid ignorance on the one hand, and pedantry on the other : ignorance makes a female companion contemptible, pedantry makes her ridiculous ; nor is it easy to say which of the two are most disgusting.

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C H A P. III.

Of the Employments and Amusements of Women.

IN every country, where civilization and culture have begun to take place, and where the inhabitants are not obliged to be continually employed in procuring the necessaries of life, women are considered, not so much as the partners of our toil and labour, as the sweeteners of our pleasures and enjoyments: while we exert ourselves abroad, in cultivating the fields, carrying on trades, and working at manufactures, we leave them at home to enjoy the fruits of our industry; when we return, we lay these fruits at their feet, happy ourselves, if we can contribute to their happiness.

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WOMEN, being thus exempted from the labour of procuring their subsistence, have a great deal of time upon their hands, which the domestic duties that fall to their share are not sufficient to fill up; such is human nature, especially where the spirits are active, and the imagination lively, that time of this kind is of all others the most disagreeable: in order, therefore, to fill up this blank, as well as to vary the scene of human life, a variety of little employments, diversions, and amusements, have been contrived; many of them adapted to both sexes, and some of them to the fair sex only.

IN states of the most savage barbarity, or in these but a few degrees removed from it, women being considered only as the

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slaves and drudges of the men, and as the means of perpetuating their race, are destined only to labour in their fields, or in their houses, and to bring up their children. Thus, constantly employed, they have but little time; and constantly depressed, they have but little inclination for amusement: in such states and conditions of human nature, we shall therefore meet with few female diversions, and these too, only such as seem to have arisen from nature, or from chance, and not from any exertion of genius or refinement in the pursuit of pleasure.

IN the East, where women are exempted from labour; not because they are esteemed and regarded, but because it would render them less delicate instruments of these voluptuous pleasures in which the Easterns place their chiefest happiness; they are confined to seraglios and harems, where neither their employments nor amusements can admit of much variety; and where a large portion of their time is consumed in regret, or slumbered away in that soft indolence and relaxation of body and mind, which the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges reckon the highest felicity that can be attained in this world, and the chief ingredient in the beatitude of that which is to come.

Diversions
and amuse-
ments, the
result of idle-
ness.

As the necessities of nature must be satisfied before any other appetite can be formed, or object fixed upon, employments must therefore have been every where prior to amusements, which could only come in as secondary considerations. Accordingly we advance many centuries into the history of the world, before we have any account of amusements, and many of the first ages of barbarity; the subsequent ones of care and simplicity, after the first foundation of states, generally pass away, before they have
time

time to think of, or inclination to almost any diversion or amusement. Private and trifling diversions may arise from merriness of heart ; public ones are only founded on idleness and affluence.

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IN the earlier ages of antiquity, it was not inconsistent with the highest dignity, to act in what we would reckon the meanest of menial employments. Gideon and Arunah assisted in the various labours of husbandry. Abraham went and brought a calf from the flock, skinned it, and gave it to his wife, who dressed it : then he himself took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed ; set them before the angels, and stood by them under a tree ; a custom to this day continued among many of the eastern nations, especially in the Levant ; where nothing is more common than to see their princes fetch home from their flocks, and kill, whatever they have pitched upon for the use of their families ; while the princesses their wives, or daughters, prepare a fire, and perform the office of an European cook-maid. We shall have occasion to see afterward, that such employments were not peculiar to the people, nor to the ages we are considering.

Women of
antiquity how
employed.

ANOTHER part of female employment in the earlier ages, was grinding of corn : the ancients had not, and in many countries they still have not, mills so constructed as to go by wind or water : theirs were only two small stones, the uppermost of which was turned by the hand, a task generally performed by two women. Such were used in Egypt in the time of Pharaoh ; for Moses, in the relation of the plagues which infested that country on account of the Israelites, says, that the first-born throughout all the land died, from the first-born of Pharaoh who was upon the throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant that was behind the mill. They were used in the time of our Saviour, who says, “ two

“ women.

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“ women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, “ and the other left.” They are used at this day, all over the Levant, and even in the north of Scotland ; where the women who turn them, have a particular song which they then sing, intended perhaps to divert them from thinking on the severity of their labour. When the women had grinded the corn into meal, it was likewise their province to make it into bread. Sarah was ordered by her husband, when he entertained the angels, to make cakes for them. Cakes, among many of the ancients, were offered on the altars of their gods, from which custom even the Israelites did not altogether abstain ; as the scriptures frequently inform us, that their women baked cakes to the Queen of Heaven.

PASTURAGE was almost the only method of subsistence in the times we are speaking of ; and the women of every rank and condition, as well as the men, were not exempted from attending on the flocks, drawing water for them to drink, and doing all the other offices which the nature of such an employment required. Pasturage obliged the ancient Israelites, and other inhabitants of the East, to embrace a wandering life, that they might procure fresh food for their flocks. Instead, therefore, of dwelling in houses, as we do, they erected only tents, for the convenience of frequent removals : these tents were made of camel’s hair and wool, the spinning and weaving of which was a part of the occupation of their women ; and from the time that cloth was substituted as a covering for the body, instead of the skins of animals, the whole operation of making it devolved also on the women, who weaved it in the most simple manner, by conducting the woof with their fingers, instead of a shuttle.

IN

IN countries where the arts are but in their infancy, every man is generally his own artificer. The men make the various instruments which they employ in their work, and the women make the cloth for covering themselves and their families: but in the days of Moses, the Israelites seem to have been advanced a few degrees beyond this state. Metallurgy seems to have made a considerable progress: even in the time of Abraham, they had instruments, probably of steel, for sheering their sheep: Abraham had a sabre, which he drew to sacrifice his son Isaac. And they had even arrived to works of taste in gold and in silver: they must therefore have been at this period more advanced in the arts, than the Greeks at the time of the siege of Troy, whose arms and shields were only made of copper; or than many savage nations at this time, whose arms are only hardened wood, sometimes pointed with flints, or bones of animals.

SUCH only is the imperfect account we are enabled to give of female employments in the patriarchal ages. Their amusements and diversions, if they had any, are still involved in deeper obscurity. Almost in every period, and among every people, however wild and uncultivated, we find some rudiments of singing and dancing: poems, containing the principal circumstances of the history of their country, and the praise of their gods and heroes, were in use among the ancient Phœnicians, Arabians, Chinese, Greeks, Mexicans, &c. It is probable, therefore, that the ancient Israelitish women amused themselves with singing the songs of their poets; which, among them as well as among their neighbours, were chiefly composed either in praise of the Deity, to thank him for some remarkable deliverance, or to celebrate some martial achievement of themselves or their ancestors. And that these poems

Amusements
of the women
of antiquity
but little
known.

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were not always composed, nor always sung, by the men only, appears evident from the song of Barak and Deborah, handed down to us by Moses. Jubal, the brother of Tubal Cain, had long before this time invented musical instruments : it is not therefore improbable, that the Israelitish women accompanied their songs with instrumental music ; a custom we often meet with in early ages, and among uncultivated people.

BESIDES the recital of songs and poems, we may reckon dancing among the female diversions of the times we are reviewing. David danced before the ark of the Lord ; and we find old Barzilai bewailing his incapacity for that exercise, in a manner that shewed how much it was the favourite, and perhaps the religious, diversion of the times in which he lived. As women are generally at all times, and particularly while in the bloom of youth and beauty, more cheerful, light-hearted, and given to the sportive amusements, than men ; it is highly probable, that they did not sit inactive spectators of a diversion so much in use : and on some festival occasions, especially sheep-sheering, we have the strongest reasons to believe, that there were promiscuous meetings, where both sexes rejoiced, made merry, and perhaps danced together. Dancing is perhaps not less ancient than songs, nor less practised by savage nations, over whom music has commonly a power, to which even the most delicate Italian ear is a stranger. It elevates them to extacy, and often prompts them to exert themselves till they fall down breathless. Even the wretches who, in America, smart under the rod of European slavery, though so dispirited, as in appearance to have bid an eternal farewell to happiness and pleasure, start up at the power of music, and dance as if their bodies were strangers to pain, and their hearts to sorrow.

IN

IN the times we are considering, games of chance were not known ; and even in the days of Solomon, who with an unheard-of degree of magnificence and libertinism had indulged himself in every vanity, and in every delight, neither games nor theatrical entertainments seem to have been introduced. If we may credit the commentators on the Talmud, all kinds of games and spectacles were not only forbid, but abhorred by every good Israelite, on account of the judgments which had fallen upon such as had ventured to be present at them among the neighbouring nations. The comment on the book of Ruth introduces old Naomi dissuading her daughter-in-law from returning into the land of Israel, because women were not there allowed to go to the theatres, as among the Gentiles. The Jewish comment on the Lamentations of Jeremiah, introduces the church of that people expostulating with God, that she had never indulged herself in entering into such prophane places ; and the Talmud itself expressly forbids, that they should enter them on any consideration whatever.

ON this, and some other accounts, it would seem, that the amusements of the women, in the times we are speaking of, were but few and simple. Perhaps one of the most common was, regaling themselves in the open air, as the scripture expresses it, “ every one under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree ; ” a custom as ancient as Abraham, and at this day almost the only amusement practised in the East ; where the heat of the climate disposes more to relaxation in the shade, than to the sportive diversions used by the active inhabitants of colder regions.

WE are informed by Herodotus, that in Egypt the employments of the women, like most of the other customs of that people,

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were totally different from what they were in other countries. We have already mentioned, that the Egyptian women were occupied abroad in trade, merchandise, and agriculture; and we now add, that, according to this author, they left all the domestic employments and cares to their men. We are, however, rather of opinion, that this was not strictly the case: the mercantile caravans, which travelled in places so rude and inhospitable as the neighbourhood of Egypt, were probably not composed of women; the fine linen, for which Egypt was so remarkable, was probably not spun by men, who seem by nature to have an abhorrence at the distaff. But as the division of the employments of life between the two sexes, in this country, is by the disagreement of authors involved in so much doubt and obscurity, at a period so distant, we cannot pretend to throw any light upon the subject.

Egyptian women, their amusements.

FROM the faint glimmerings of ancient history it would seem, that the public amusements and diversions of the Egyptians were only a kind of religious festivals, which they celebrated with singing, dancing, feasting, and pompous processions; in which the women bore a great part, and being adorned with a variety of flowers and garlands, carried in their hands things symbolical of the festival they were celebrating. Besides the joining in these public processions, women of distinction used to keep their birth-days with feasting and rejoicing. On the birth-day of a queen, or of a daughter of Egypt, the whole court was treated in a magnificent manner, and paid their compliments to the lady on whose account they were assembled. Great men followed the example of their prince, called together their friends and dependents, and spent the birth-days of their wives and daughters in mirth and festivity. With regard to the private amusements of the Egyptian

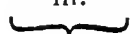
tian women, history is entirely silent. It is probable, however, that among a people so highly cultivated, they were not altogether without some of these sportive diversions, which tend to invigorate the body by unbending the mind.

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FROM the Egyptians till we come to the heroic ages, we only meet with a few scattered hints concerning the manner in which women employed or amused themselves. The Phœnician women, whose husbands were famous for trade and navigation, are said to have spent much of their time in writing and keeping of these accounts, without which trade cannot be properly managed. The Lybian women, warlike as their husbands, dedicated a great part of their time to feats of arms, and to the chase : even their amusements were some of them calculated to instil a martial spirit : one tribe, in their country, annually celebrated a festival in honour of Minerva, in which the young women divided into two parties, and fought with sticks and stones, till one of the parties was defeated. As this annual conflict was fought in honour of the goddess, they imagined that all the wounds received in it were under her peculiar care ; and that she interested herself so much in their cure, that she suffered none to die of them, but such as had forfeited their title to her favour by the loss of their virginity. It is probable, that these wounds were seldom of consequence enough to become mortal ; and when they were, it was easy to fix this stigma of female levity on the unhappy sufferer, who could not rise from the dead to vindicate her injured reputation. Thus, though we can consider the institution in no other light than a piece of state policy, it was excellently calculated to preserve chastity : not to join in the engagement was a tacit acknowledgment of unchastity ; to be wounded in it, was considered as cer-

Employment
of the women
of some other
nations.

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tain death to her who was so. Few women, therefore, would risque themselves, who were conscious of being guilty ; few women would dare to be guilty, when it was reckoned so impossible to avoid a discovery.

IN what manner the women of the Syrians, Babylonians, Medes, and Persians, who are almost the only nations which make any figure in the periods we are reviewing, were employed, is nearly all conjecture. We may, however, venture to affirm, that among the opulent they were not put to any servile or laborious tasks ; as such would have been altogether inconsistent with the delicacy in which they were brought up, and the extraordinary finery with which they were decorated. As the Babylonians were famous for their manufactures of rich embroidery, sumptuous vestments, fine linen, magnificent carpets and hangings ; and as weaving, embroidery, and other works of the like nature, were a principal part of the occupation of women, in the periods we are considering, we may reasonably conjecture, that they were employed in fabricating of these, as well as in preparing that finery with which they ornamented their persons. We have reason also to suppose, that in nations so rich and luxurious as those we have mentioned, where women were brought up in the lap of ease and indulgence, they would have several public as well as private amusements ; but what these were, or how conducted, it is in vain for us at this period to attempt to discover. We are informed, that the Babylonians had a great variety of musical instruments ; and as music is a recreation well adapted to the sentimental feelings of the female heart, it is probable, their women did not neglect it. The Medes and Persians were also famous for music and dancing. Music, among them, was called in to heighten

the.

the pleasure of the festive board ; at which they sung, and played upon instruments, the monarchs themselves sometimes taking a part in this, as well as in every other thing which promoted mirth and jollity. We are inclined to believe, that it was among the Medes and Persians that the custom was first introduced of bringing in singing and dancing women, in order to divert a company.

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AMONG the nations which have been hitherto mentioned, we could do little more than observe in general, that such was the employment, and such the amusement of the fair sex. Descending to periods less remote, we meet with descriptions more particular. In the Lesser Asia, where it would seem that women were far from being so much despised and neglected, as in many other parts of the world, even those of the first quality were not ashamed to perform the office of a washerwoman. We shall afterwards have occasion to take notice of the same custom in Greece. The Grecian wives and daughters, of whatever quality, were not, in the heroic ages, brought up in idleness. Penelope, queen of the famous Ulysses, is so frequently introduced by Homer at her loom, that almost every one has heard the story of Penelope's web ; a story which has been frequently applied to the slow and thriftless operations of the women of our modern times. The famous Helen, while confined by the besiegers of Troy, employed herself in an extraordinary piece of embroidery, which represented most of the battles fought between the Greeks and Trojans : and Andromache, when she heard of the death of Hector, embroidered a representation of that tragical scene, and adorned it with flowers. But such soft employments, such works of taste, were not the sole occupations of the women in the times we are delineating. The same Andromache, who with her needle painted the fall of the hero

Of subsequent
periods.

C H A P. hero of her country, was not ashamed to feed, and take care of,
 III. the horses of that hero when living.

BESIDES the arts of weaving and embroidery, which were not unknown to the women in the times of Moses, the Grecian fair ones employed themselves in spinning, which they performed standing, and in every other branch of the manufacture of cloth; a custom which was not obliterated even in the most polished times of their states. Alexander the Great, and many others of their heroes and statesmen, wore garments, spun and woven by their wives and sisters: and this appears to have been the practice of the earliest antiquity, as we find Solomon, in his praises of a virtuous woman, enumerating, among her other qualities, that of clothing her husband in purple and scarlet. The Greek women had particular rooms allotted to their work, near the apartments where they lodged. When they were respected by their husbands, and not given to intriguing, the provision and management of all necessaries within doors were committed to them.

Of the Greek
 women.

As the Greek ladies were almost constantly employed, and as voluntary employment often banishes even every wish of pleasure and dissipation, we have reason to believe that they had few, if any, private diversions or amusements; which are generally the offspring of idleness, as appears plainly from the difference, in this respect, between the women and the men; the former, as we have observed, being fully employed, had no need of amusements; the latter being frequently, and, in Sparta, even by law obliged to be constantly idle, were thereby induced to have recourse to games and sports of various kinds to fill up their vacant hours, and prevent that uncomfortable tedium which so constantly at-

tends idleness: to some of these public sports the women were admitted, and from others excluded by the severest penalties. Their legislator possibly imagined, that should they be indiscriminately admitted to all the amusements of the men, they would acquire an unsuitable boldness, and neglect the several duties and offices required of them at home. To what we have here observed the Spartan women are, however, an objection: we have already seen, that they amused themselves with the masculine exercises of wrestling, throwing darts, &c. But this is not all: they were obliged to appear naked at some of their solemn feasts and sacrifices, and to dance and sing, while the young men stood in a circle around them; an amusement highly indelicate, or, if a religious ceremony, only worthy of the Cyprian goddesses.

IN the earlier periods, while the Greeks found abundance of employment in procuring subsistence, in plundering their neighbours, or avenging their own quarrels; they had but few gods, and, hardly, perhaps, any festivals besides that of the vintage, when they used to make merry together with the fruits they had gathered. In the latter, when they became idle, by devolving all their labour upon slaves, and their gods had increased almost to the number of their men, the festivals celebrated in honour of them became also nearly innumerable, and were many of them accompanied with dancings, revellings, pompous processions, and other ostentatious ceremonies: into almost all of them the women were not only admitted, but in several of them acted a principal part, as singers, dancers, priestesses, &c. When, therefore, the institutions of a religion are in this manner more calculated to attract the eye, than to amend the heart; when, instead of social and moral duties, they prescribe gaudy processions, and ostenta-

tious.

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tious ceremonies; these in a great measure supply, and are actually turned into public diversions and amusements. This seems to have been remarkably the case in Greece; where, though every one of their numerous festivals was instituted in honour of some god, or in commemoration of something which they fancied was connected with religion, they often lost sight of the original institution amid the glare of ostentatious ceremony with which it was celebrated.

ANOTHER cause, which contributed to make the religious festivals of the Greeks be considered as amusements and diversions, was that ridiculous buffoonery which constituted so great a part of them: it would be tedious to enumerate one half of these buffooneries; let a few serve as a specimen. At a festival held in honour of Bacchus, the women ran about for a long time seeking the god, who, they pretended, had run away from them: this done, they passed their time in proposing riddles and questions to each other, and laughing at such as could not answer them; and at last often closed the scene with such enormous excesses, that at one of these festivals, the daughters of Minya, having in their madness killed Hippasus, had him dressed and served up to table as a rarity. At another, kept in honour of Venus and Adonis, they beat their breasts, tore their hair, and mimicked all the signs of the most extravagant grief, with which they supposed the goddess to have been affected on the death of her favourite paramour. At another, in honour of the nymph Cotys, they addressed her as the goddess of wantonness with many mysterious rites and ceremonies. At Corinth, these rites and ceremonies, being perhaps thought inconsistent with the character of modest women, this festival was only celebrated by harlots. Athenæus mentions a festival,

festival, at which the women laid hold on all the old bachelors they could find, and dragged them round an altar; beating them all the time with their fists, as punishment for their neglect of the sex. We shall only mention two more; at one of which, after the assembly had met in the temple of Ceres, the women shut out all the men and dogs, themselves and the bitches remaining in the temple all night: in the morning, the men were let in, and the time was spent in laughing together at the frolic. At the other, in honour of Bacchus, they counterfeited frenzy and madness; and to make this madness appear the more real, they used to eat the raw and bloody entrails of goats newly slaughtered. And, indeed, the whole of the festivals of Bacchus, a deity much worshipped in Greece, were celebrated with rites either ridiculous, obscene, or madly extravagant. There were others, however, in honour of the other gods and goddesses, which were more decent, and had more the appearance of religious solemnity, though even in these, the women dressed out in all their finery; and adorned with flowers and garlands, either formed splendid processions, or assisted in performing ceremonies; the general tendency of which was to amuse rather than instruct.

WHEREVER women are advanced a few degrees above the most abject slavery, nothing is more natural to them than a constant endeavour to attract the attention of our sex, by a display of their native charms, set off to the best advantage by dress and ornament. But it is only in states polished to excess, that they have imagined, that to dress, to ornament themselves, and display all their charms, are the only things with which they have any business or concern in this world. Such, as we have now seen, were not the ancient Greeks, nor such were the Romans in the early periods of their

Roman women, how employed.

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empire. Tanaquil, the queen of Tarquin, one of the first and best kings of Rome, was admitted to public honours on account of the use she had made of her distaff; and Lucretia, whose tragical story is so well known in the Roman history, when her husband and some friends with him, unexpectedly arrived from the army in the middle of the night, was found with her maids spinning and working in wool; and the general practice of this period, as well among the Romans as the Greeks and other nations, was, that the women manufactured all the cloaths used by their husbands and families; not thinking the useful and necessary arts of life so incompatible with elegance and grandeur as they began to do afterwards, and as they unfortunately do still in our modern times: but while their husbands and relations were labouring for, or defending them abroad, they at home were providing them with cloaths and other necessaries, according to their rank, and the fashion of their country, and thus mutually forwarding one common interest; but in subsequent periods, when luxury, with its numerous train of attending evils, had crept into Rome, the women became by degrees less useful, and ceased to be employed in proportion as they were diverted and amused.

HISTORY, so far as we know, has not acquainted us, whether the Roman ladies had any private diversions: their public ones were such as were common to both sexes; as bathing, theatrical representations, horse-races, shows of wild beasts, fighting with one another; and sometimes with men, whom the emperors in the plenitude of their despotic power ordered to engage them; naval battles, and gladiators hacking one another to pieces. The Romans, of both sexes, spent a great deal of time at the baths; which at first, perhaps, were interwoven with their religion, at last,

last, were only considered as refinements in luxury; they were places of public resort, where all the news of the times were to be heard, where people met with their acquaintances and friends, where public libraries were kept for such as chose to read, and where poets recited their works to such as would hear. In the earlier periods of Rome, separate baths were appropriated to each sex; but luxury beginning by degrees to thrust out decency, they at last came to bathe promiscuously together; the men, however, being dressed and undressed by the men; and the women, following the example, by those of their own sex also. The emperor Adrian prohibited this indecent manner of bathing, and re-established the separate baths; inclination, by degrees, overcame the prohibition, and Marcus Aurelius renewed it. Heliogabalus, the patron of gluttony and indecorum, formally abolished it; and it was again renewed under Alexander Severus. But debauchery was by this time become too powerful to be restrained by law; and in spite of every effort, promiscuous bathing continued till the time of Constantine; who finally annulled it, by adding the precepts of Christianity to the legislative authority. There were likewise at Rome public walks, planted on each side with rows of trees, as in modern times; to which both sexes resorted in the evenings, to walk and amuse themselves. The emperors sometimes also gave lotteries; in which the women had tickets, that entitled them to prizes. In short, so much did the Roman women recede from the custom of antiquity, in mixing themselves with the men, that at last there was hardly an amusement, a business, or debauchery, in which they were not engaged, either as parties or spectators.

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C H A P. IV.

*The same Subject continued.*C H A P.
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MEN, though in many respects exactly similar in all ages and countries, in others are so dissimilar, that they can hardly be considered as the same kind of beings; their similarity is in all times and places the effect of nature; their dissimilarity the effect of art, and of the habits and customs which have arisen from it. These every where govern and direct more than one half of their thoughts and actions, lay them under obligations stronger than the laws of their country; and in many cases obliterate even the laws of nature. Such was the case with the Roman women at the public baths; such is the case at present in Russia, and many other parts of the world; where female modesty not only gives place to custom, but, by custom, is in time entirely eradicated.

As the other articles, which we mentioned in the list of diversions and amusements of the Roman ladies, are already so well known, we shall not enter into a particular detail of them. When from the Romans we turn our eyes towards these nations, who afterwards overturned their empire, we find them, though by the Romans denominated barbarians, in many circumstances, less deserving of that contemptible epithet than these insolent depopulators of the world. We find their women placing no small share of female excellence in the exercise of the domestic, and still more in that of the conjugal virtues: we find that their mothers had early in-
filled

filled into their minds that modesty, which more than any ornaments adorned; and that frugality and industry, which in a barren climate, and almost unassisted by the men, maintained them. Their employment was not only to take care of, and manage all the domestic concerns of the family, but also to provide whatever could be obtained by peaceful industry; for their husbands, inclined only to occupy themselves in war and hunting, left every thing else to the conduct and direction of their wives.

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THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and perhaps every other northern people, deemed agriculture an ignoble profession; only fit for slaves and women: even the Visigoths, on the coasts of Spain, devolved the care of their flocks and their fields on their women, and encouraged them to support the fatigue of managing them, by establishing annual assemblies, in which those women who had most distinguished themselves in agriculture received public applause. The men, in all the nations we have mentioned, counted it only glorious to live by the sword and the bow, and consequently, when not engaged in war, or in the chase, sunk into slothful indolence; and could only be said to live, because they ate, drank, and slept. Every necessary work being thus left to the women, they were perhaps so fully employed as to have no time for any thing else; if they had any diversions or amusements, as they had no historians, and as those of other nations were but imperfectly acquainted with their manners, we have no account of them.

WE shall afterwards have occasion to relate, that the far greater part of the female sex in Asia, Africa, and America, are in a state of the most abject slavery, and employed only in the execution of every

Eastern women, how employed.

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every slavish and laborious task. We shall not therefore now take up the dismal tale, but content ourselves with mentioning a few particulars only, and these chiefly such as relate to women, who are the least exposed to feel the oppressive effects of despotism. The Hindoo women, the Mahommedans of Bengal, Naugaracut, Lahor, and several other places of the East, are, in general, not so much oppressed by slavery, as in many parts of Africa and America; because, in the former places, they are considered only as an article of delicacy and pleasure; in the latter, only as the slaves of their lords, and the breeders of children. To the women of Hindostan, we owe a great part of these works of taste so elegantly executed on the manufactures of the East; the beautiful colourings and exquisite designs of their printed cottons; all the embroidery, and a part of that filligree work, which so much exceeds any thing in Europe. The deficiency of taste therefore, with which we so commonly charge them, does not seem to be so much a defect of nature as of education: brought up in luxurious indolence, excluded from all the busy scenes of life, and like children provided with all those things, the acquisition of which calls forth the powers of the mind and body, they seldom have any motive to exert themselves; but when such a motive exists, they have often exhibited the most convincing proofs of their ability. Mher-ul-Nissa, who was afterward the favourite Sultana of Jehangire, emperor of Hindostan, being, with several female slaves, at first shut up in a despicable apartment of the seraglio, on the comfortable allowance of two shillings per day, in order to raise her own reputation, and to support herself and slaves in a better manner than that scanty pittance would admit of, began to call forth the powers of taste and invention, which had hitherto lain dormant: she produced some admirable pieces of tapestry and embroidery,

painted filks, with the most exquisite delicacy; and invented a variety of female ornaments, superior to those in common use; these being bought up with avidity over all the city of Delhi, made her so famous, that the Sultan paid her a visit; and captivated with her sense and her charms, from that moment became her slave.

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SUCH are the female employments of the East; they are nearly the same among the Turks now settled in Europe; every Turkish seraglio or haram has a garden adjoining to it, and in the middle of this garden a large room, more or less decorated, according to the wealth of the proprietor; here the ladies spend most of their time with their attendant nymphs around them, employed at their music, embroidery, or loom; nor should we wonder, if in these retreats they find more real pleasure and enjoyment, than in the unbounded freedom of Europe, where love, interest, and ambition, so often destroy their peace; and where scandal, with her envenomed shafts, too often strikes equally at guilt and innocence.

So little do the writers of voyages and travellers know what passes in the penetralia of the harems of the East, and so private are these recesses kept even from the eye of speculative intrusion, that our knowledge of what is going forward within them is exceedingly imperfect: this only in general seems certain, that the ladies of the great, spend their time lolling on silken sofas, bathing in rose water, perfuming themselves with costly essences, and adorning their persons, solicitous by every method to attract the attention, and obtain the greatest share of the conjugal favour of their lord. Public amusements they have none; as these would necessarily

Luxurious
amusements.

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necessarily expose them to be seen ; a thing which, through custom, the women themselves seem little less afraid of than the jealous tyrants who confine them.

IN the empire of the Mogul, the women are often called into the apartments of the men after supper, where they spend the remainder of the evening in regaling themselves with betel *, with a few of the liquors of the country, and in conversation ; but in these cases they are constantly veiled ; and to offer to unveil, or even to touch one of them, would be considered as the greatest rudeness ; and perhaps punished with immediate stabbing. At court they are frequently admitted into a gallery, with a curtain before them, through which, without being seen, they can see and hear whatever passes. It has sometimes happened, that the throne has been occupied by a woman, who never appearing in open court, issued her imperial mandates from behind this curtain ; like an invisible being producing the greatest effects, while the cause of them was wrapt in darkness and obscurity.

Dancing, an
amusement in
many places.

AT Constantinople, where the inhabitants still retain the manners of the Asiatics, and in most places of the Levant, the Turks, who love indolent amusements, chuse out in the evening a green spot, in some thick shade, in which they spread a carpet ; and sitting down cross-legged together, men and women upon it, divert themselves with drinking coffee and sherbet, while their female slaves attend round them to play, sing, or dance, as they shall direct ; the mistress, or lady, of the first quality in the party, often leading the dance, in the same manner as Diana is said to

* Betel is a root, which the Easterns make use of as the Europeans do tobacco ; it is chewed by all ranks, and by men, women, and children.

have done with her Nymphs on the banks of the Eurotas. But though women of rank, at Constantinople, may lead off a dance, such does not seem to be the general practice of the Asiatics, from whom they are descended; at least, they do not dance for amusement; it is true, the Mogul emperors often make their wives and concubines dance before them, and the other great men imitate their example; but this is not a voluntary act of the women; it is what they are obliged to by the command of a superior; and when this superior retires, they exercise the same authority over their own slaves, who are also obliged to dance for their amusement. We have already seen, in the beginning of this chapter, that dancing was practised in an early period in the East; and we find that it still prevails among all nations, rude and cultivated; only with this difference, that the rude dance to shew their strength and agility; the cultivated for exercise, and to shew the gracefulness of their persons and motions; and so much are mankind almost every where delighted with dancing, that the indigent in many places have converted it into a trade, from which they derive no uncomfortable subsistence.

IN the neighbourhood of Surat, the Hindoos have many magnificent temples; and in every temple are a number of Bramins or priests, dedicated to the service of the god there worshipped. A part of that service consists in dancing on religious assemblies, and other solemn occasions; and these dances are performed by young women, the most handsome and beautiful in the country*. These reside in the temple, and are by the Bramins carefully col-

* When Mamood first took the magnificent temple of Sumnat, he found there five hundred dancing girls, and three hundred musicians.

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lected from every place, where their own influence, or the veneration of their temple reaches. In order to induce them to enter into this service, besides the immense rewards held out to them in the world to come, they have some peculiar privileges in this. They may leave the temple when they please; and being accounted holy, they are then eagerly sought after in marriage, and have the preference in this respect to all other women. While in the temples, they are entirely under the direction of the Bramins; and it is by many supposed, that they are also entirely appropriated to their pleasures; but however this be, they are hardly ever allowed, like the other female dancers of the country, to perform for the amusement of the public.

Dancing girls,
their description.

BESIDES these religious dancers, there is almost in every large city, companies of dancing girls, called Balliaderes; who, in the manner of our strolling players, go about for the amusement of the public; and who will exhibit their performances at the house of any person, who is able to pay what they demand; or may be seen by any one for a trifle at their public assemblies. These beautiful girls are constantly followed by an old deformed musician, who beats time with a brazen instrument, called a Tom; and continually at every stroke repeats the word Tom with such vociferation, that he soon works himself into a kind of phrenzy; the Balliaderes, at the same time eager to please, and intoxicated with the music, and the smell of the essences with which they are perfumed, soon after begin to be in the same state: their dances are in general expressive of the passion of love, and they manage them so as to give, even the most ignorant, tolerable ideas of that passion in all its different situations and circumstances; and so

great

great is their beauty, so voluptuous their figure, so rich and ingeniously contrived their dress, that they seldom perform without drawing together a numerous croud of spectators.

STROLLING female dancers, who live by that profession, are not, however, peculiar to the East Indies; they have of late been met with in Otaheite, and several other places; but besides their strolling dancers in Otaheite, they have a dance called Timoradee, which the young girls perform, whenever eight or ten of them can be got together; it consists in every motion, gesture, and tone of voice that is truly lascivious; and being brought up to it from their childhood, in every motion, and in every gesture, they keep time with an exactness scarcely excelled by the most expert stage-dancers of Europe. But though this diversion is allowed to the virgin, it is prohibited to the wife; who, from the moment of marriage, must abstain from it for ever.

THAT such women as have rather been the outcasts of fortune, and are consequently obliged to exert themselves, in order to gain a subsistence, should make dancing a profession, and exhibit their performances for money, has nothing in it extraordinary; but that both men and women, who reckon themselves so far above want, as to be ashamed to perform for hire, should become strolling dancers from choice, in some degree excites our astonishment, as being perfectly inconsistent with the ideas which we entertain in Europe. Such, however, in the island of Ulietea, were met with by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who have given the following description of them: "In the course of our walk, we met
" with a company of strolling dancers, who detained us two hours;
" and during all that time afforded us great entertainment; the

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“ company consisted of two women dancers, and six men, with
 “ three drums: they were some of the most considerable people of
 “ the island; and though they were continually going from place
 “ to place, they did not, like the strolling companies of Otaheite,
 “ take any gratuity from the spectators. The women had upon
 “ their heads a considerable quantity of plaited hair, which was
 “ brought several times round their head, and adorned in many
 “ parts with the flowers of the Cape Jessamine, which were stuck
 “ in with much taste, and made a head-dress truly elegant; their
 “ necks, shoulders, and arms, were naked; so were their breasts,
 “ as low as the parting of the arm; below that they were covered
 “ with black cloth, which sat close to the body; at the side of each
 “ breast, next the arm, was placed a small plume of black feathers;
 “ upon their hips rested a quantity of cloth, plaited very full;
 “ it reached up to the breast, and fell down below into long
 “ petticoats; these quite concealed their feet; which they ma-
 “ naged with as much dexterity as our opera-dancers could have
 “ done; the plaits above the waist were brown and white alter-
 “ nately, the petticoats below were all white.

“ In this dress they advanced sideways, in a measured step,
 “ keeping excellent time to the drums, which beat briskly and
 “ loud; soon after they began to shake their hips, giving the
 “ folds of cloth that lay upon them a very quick motion, which
 “ was in some degree continued through the whole dance; though
 “ the body was thrown into various postures, sometimes standing,
 “ sometimes sitting, and sometimes resting on their knees and
 “ elbows; the fingers also being moved, at the same time, with a
 “ quickness scarcely to be imagined. Much of the dexterity of
 “ the dancers, however, and the entertainment of the spectators,
 “ consisted

“confisted in the wantonnefs of their attitudes, and geftures ;
 “which was indeed fuch as exceeds all defcription.”

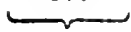
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From the earlieft ages, dancing appears to have been either a religious or an imitative exercife ; David danced before the ark of the Lord, the Philiftines danced before Dagon, many of the contemporary nations frequently danced at their folemn meetings, in their groves, and on their high places ; the Greeks did the fame at fome of the feftivals celebrated in honour of their gods ; and the travellers of our own times give us numberlefs accounts of the dancings of the favages before their idols. So different, however, are the ideas we have formed of religion, that we are apt to confider dancing as altogether inconfiftent with its folemnity ; but, perhaps, thofe who thought otherwife, introduced it as a fign of gratitude and thankfulnefs, for health, vigour, and agility ; and, to fhew the gods, that they were cheerful and happy in the enjoyment of their bleffings, and under the adminiftration of their government ; and proceeding from fuch fentiments in the worfhippers, it could not be to the gods an unacceptable fervice. It has likewife been much ufed in an imitative or fymbolical manner. The Indians dance their war-dance, to fhew the firength, the agility, and ferocity they can exert in battle ; and the women we have mentioned indecently dance, what may be called their love-dance, to fhew how well they are qualified for the rapturous enjoyments of that paffion ; and it is only in the polite countries of Europe that we dance purely for the fake of dancing. If rude and barbarous nations make their dances expreffive of their employments and their feelings ; it is worth confidering, whether we might not improve on the plan,

and

Thoughts on
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and add sentiment and expression to what we at present only look upon as frolic and amusement.

Bathing, an
amusement in
the East.

BESIDES dancing, which does not as in Europe seem an amusement voluntarily practised by all ranks and conditions of women; in the East they have the diversion of bathing, which is so closely interwoven with their religion as well as with their pastime, that we can hardly say to which of them it belongs. In warm countries, where cleanliness is so absolutely necessary to the health and sweetness of the body, as almost to deserve a place among the moral virtues; there is scarcely a religious system into which frequent bathing has not been introduced, as a ceremony without which the gods would not accept the prayers and sacrifices of men, and hence both sexes are more accustomed to bathe than among us, who by religion are not enjoined any such duty. But there are in the East other causes, which perhaps even more forcibly prompt to the use of the bath than religion itself. The first is inclination, which must operate in the strongest manner in climates scorched by a vertical sun; to give us some idea of the strength of this inclination in such climates, we need only reflect on what we sometimes feel in the scorching summer months on entering into a cool shade, or viewing a pool of water; the second is the love of liberty, every bathing-place set apart for the use of the women is a kind of public rendezvous, where the sex in general meet to talk over the news, the scandal, and the fashions; it is a sacred asylum, where no man dare enter, and where women are consequently free from the tyranny of their husbands and guardians; and besides, in going to and coming from it, they sometimes manage so as to be seen by their lovers, or make an

assignation

affignation with their gallants: on all these accounts, we are not to wonder that bathing is so much practised in the East; and especially by the fair sex, who have hardly any other liberty than that which they enjoy on this occasion.

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WE have already mentioned the indecent manner in which the Romans of both sexes bathed promiscuously together; the Greeks in the heroic ages did the same, with this difference only, that the places they used were not so confined, being commonly some river, or the sea itself. To the indelicacy of these two nations, so famous in history, we shall oppose the practice of the Turkish Ladies at Adrianople, as related by lady Mary Wortley Montague. “ I went, says she, to the bagnio about
“ ten o’clock; it was already full of women, I was in my
“ travelling habit, which is a riding-dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one of
“ them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity,
“ but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know
“ no European court where the ladies would have behaved
“ themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger: I believe
“ there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles and satirical whispers that never fail in our
“ assemblies, when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in
“ the fashion; they repeated over and over to me, charming,
“ very charming; the first sophas were covered with cushions and
“ rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their
“ slaves, behind them, but without any distinction of rank by
“ their dress, all being in the state of nature; that is, in plain
“ English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed;
“ yet there was not the least wanton smile, or immodest gesture
“ among

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“ among them. They walked and moved with the same majestic
“ grace which Milton describes our general mother with; there
“ were many among them as exactly proportioned as ever any
“ goddess was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or a Titian—and
“ most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their
“ beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their
“ shoulders, braided, either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly repre-
“ senting the figures of the graces.

“ I was here convinced of the truth of a reflection I have
“ often made, that if it were the fashion to go naked the face
“ would be hardly observed. I perceived that the ladies of the
“ most delicate skins and finest shapes had the greatest share of
“ my admiration, though their faces were sometimes less beauti-
“ ful than those of their companions; to tell you the truth, I
“ had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Gervais could
“ have been there invisible; I fancy it would have much im-
“ proved his art, to see so many fine women naked, in different
“ postures, some in conversation, some working, others drink-
“ ing coffee or sherbet; and many, negligently lying on their
“ cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen
“ or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several
“ pretty fancies.—They generally take this diversion once a
“ week, and stay there at least four or five hours without getting
“ cold, by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cool
“ room.—I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and should
“ have been very glad to pass more time with them, but was in
“ haste to see the ruins of Justinian’s church, which did not
“ afford me so agreeable a prospect as I had left, being little more
“ than a heap of stones.”

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IV.Of European
women.

As we have hitherto met with but little diversity in the employments of women, as their amusements have not been numerous in the countries we have surveyed, we now proceed to take a view of Europe; where, though we may not perhaps be able to find the scene of female employments enlarged according to our wishes, we shall at least find a long and ample list of female diversions and amusements.—If by employment we understand being occupied in such things as are useful to society, in that case women of rank and quality, in most of the polite countries of Europe, may be struck entirely out, as having no employment at all; and should we even admit works of fancy and taste into our list of useful employments, such is the love of dissipation, that even few of these are at present executed by ladies of fashion. Descending from the most elevated ranks of female life, to those placed in a middle station, who neither have reason to be uplifted with the pride of wealth, made giddy with the glare of preferment, nor depressed by the pinching hand of poverty; such we should naturally expect to find employed so as to be useful to themselves and to their families; and such we could heartily wish the impartiality of historians would allow us to paint them. But even in this most eligible of all human conditions, where their time is not devoured by the giddy vortex of pomp and ceremony, where it is not wrested from them by the labours necessary to procure daily bread; to what is it dedicated? seldom! we are afraid, to useful purposes; but, rather to copying the examples of the superior ranks, and to gadding abroad after every fashionable folly and amusement: nor in saying this have we acted the part of declaimers; the portrait we have drawn is only too faithful a representation of the times, and naturally points out to us that we are to look for the useful and the beneficial,

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ficial, only among such women as are obliged to gain a subsistence for themselves, and perhaps for their children, by their own industry. The whole human race is perhaps naturally averse to labour. From this general view of women, it would seem that they are particularly so, especially in Europe, where the softness of their frame, of their education, and the common indulgence they meet with from our sex, teach them to look up to us as to beings not only obliged to supply all their wants, but even to minister to all their pleasures, seldom considering how far such a ministration is agreeable to our inclination; and even sometimes insisting on running the giddy round of amusement, when conscious that it is out of our power to supply the means of its useless extravagance. But this is not all; in many companies, especially of the politer sort of women, we have heard the inconsiderate assembly, as with one voice, exclaim against the marriages of such as were poor, why, say they, should such people marry? they can only fill the country with beggars! never recollecting, that if such only were to marry as could afford to bring up their children in idleness, they themselves would want servants to do for them those offices they think so much beneath their dignity, and that the strength of a hive does not consist in the drones that devour, but in the bees that collect the honey.

BUT to return to our ladies of rank and fashion, there are still to be found among them several, who bestow no inconsiderable share of time and attention on the concerns of their families, as also upon the cultivation of some of the fine arts, as music, painting, drawing, &c. To run through the long and varied list of occupations, in which women of the middling and lower conditions of life employ themselves, for pleasure, or for profit, would

would be tedious to our female readers, who know them much better than we do; we shall therefore only observe in general, that, in all the polite countries of Europe, the proper office of women of middling fortune is the care, inspection, and management of every thing belonging to the family, while that of the men is to provide by their labour and industry what the women are to manage with care and frugality. When we descend to the lower and more useful classes of women, who not having been cast into the lap of fortune, are obliged to work that they may live; we find their employments various and extensive: most of the manufactures in Europe, which do not depend so much upon strength as upon delicacy, are in a great measure carried on by women, and many of those which are even of a rougher kind receive a last polish from their softer touch. It is to their patient industry and ductile hands that we owe our finest linens, cambrics, and lawns; it is to them also that we are indebted for a great part of our gold and silver laces, our embroideries, and a variety of other works of taste and elegance, too tedious to mention. Another part of them, whose lot is cast in a different, though not less useful manner, employ themselves in assisting the husbandman in a variety of the less laborious branches of agriculture; and, not a few there are, who even toil in reaping and gathering in the harvest: but what we ought to value above every thing, is that cleanness, which by their means we enjoy in our houses and cloaths; benefits which we could hardly, or at least awkwardly, procure for ourselves.

It may perhaps be thought strange, that in describing the various employments of women, we have not hitherto mentioned that which of all others is their most natural and common office,

Nu sing of
children the
natural em-
ployment of
women.

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the nursing and bringing up of children; a subject which we have reserved entirely for this place, that we might not be under the necessity of so frequent a repetition, as we should have been otherwise led to by its occurring in every period, and in every country we have had occasion to mention.

THE most tender care and anxious solicitude for their infant offspring is an innate idea throughout the wide extent of animal nature, much more strongly imprinted on the minds of females than of males: a wise institution of Providence, for which various reasons will easily occur to the intelligent reader, and which we need not therefore take the trouble of pointing out.

A LITTLE attention to the nature and œconomy of the brute animals will convince us, that the care of their young is an innate principle, and not the effect of reasoning; but we shall be still more convinced of this, if we attentively consider the females of the human genus, in savage and in civil life; a consideration that will uniformly point out to us, that this innate care and anxious solicitude diminish gradually, in proportion as women advance more toward that perfection, or rather imperfection of politeness, to which several nations have now arisen; where folly, fashion, and the love of pleasure, have so much engrossed their affection, as in most cases greatly to weaken, and in some totally to obliterate, a passion hardly less natural than that of self-preservation.

Considerations on
nursing.

THAT women were, as well as other animals, intended by nature to nurse and bring up their own children, is a truth which we presume nobody will deny; hence rigid philosophers, in dogmatizing on this subject, have as usual shewn their cynical moroseness,

moroseness, by branding such of the sex as did otherwise, with every indignant epithet; never considering that ill-humour, particularly when exerted against a woman, seldom serves to reclaim; nor that nature in many cases seems to have left something in such a situation that art might have room to improve it; nor that they themselves, while they are railing from their studies at the women for deviating from nature, are at the same time deviating most widely from her in almost every action of their lives. But let us consider the matter a little more attentively, and we shall find that nature gave to horses tails: convenience directs us to cut them: she gave to men hair and beards, but we reckon it no crime to crop the one and shave the other: she gave to women breasts, and furnished them with milk, the natural food of infants; but that they should be thereby constantly obliged to nurse them, would be almost as whimsical as that we should be obliged to let our hair and our beards remain in a state of nature; especially as it now appears, by many repeated trials, that children can in some cases be brought up better by the milk of another woman than by that of the mother, and that they frequently do exceedingly well without any milk at all: every thing else therefore being equal, we are of opinion that there is no such preference due to the milk of the mother, as physicians and philosophers would willingly make us believe; nor can they from experience, the only sure guide in such enquiries, deduce any such inference; all young animals we imagine may naturally thrive best upon the milk of animals of the same species, but to carry this idea to individuals, is giving a limited and narrow view of the operations of nature, and we might almost with an equal degree of credibility suppose, that a young plant could no where grow so well as in the same

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hot-bed which nourished its parent, as that a child could not thrive as well by the milk of any healthful woman, as by that of its mother.

To suppose, therefore, that a child does not equally thrive by good milk from any other person, is establishing a specific quality in the milk of every mother, adapted to the constitution of her own child only; and putting the important business of rearing children on such a footing, that when the mother chances to die, the poor infant must either expire soon after, or, at best, live a feeble monument of improper nourishment; and so perpetually point out a blunder in the constitution of nature. Nor do the young of the human species only, thrive equally on the milk of the species; it is the same with the young of all other animals; at least of the domestic animals with which we are acquainted. The calf and the lamb do just as well when they suck another cow or ewe, as when they suck the dam which brought them forth; provided the animals be healthful, and the quantity of milk sufficient to maintain the young ones committed to their care; nay, we have never, in some of the best breeding counties of England, been able to observe any difference, if they had plenty of milk, whether they received it by sucking or lapping.

FROM these observations it appears, that what has hitherto been alleged of the mother's milk being the only proper nourishment for her own child, has only been the vision of theory, and not the result of experience. We would not, however, on that account, endeavour to dissuade women from this most pleasant task of nursing; we persuade ourselves, that it is in most cases their duty; and if their minds are not corrupted by pursuits less natural,

natural, we flatter ourselves, that, in all cases, they will find it their greatest pleasure; especially when they consider, that by so doing they have the dear pledges of their connubial love constantly under their own care and direction; whereby they are safe from the severity, carelessness, and inattention of the female mercenary, who is but seldom one of the best of her sex; such being, with difficulty, prevailed upon to quit the care of their own infants, for the sake of money, unless urged to it by lawless necessity.

THERE are a variety of other arguments, which offer themselves in favour of this practice; but as they have been so frequently mustered, by almost every author who has wrote on nursing, we shall not now intrude them on our fair readers: we cannot, however, quit the subject, without making one observation, which we do not recollect to have met with. In every place, where the practice of giving out children to nurse is common, the state is thereby a considerable loser; because it is the idle and wealthy only who can afford to give them out, and the poor only who are obliged to take them in; whence it evidently follows, that the number of the children of the rich is increased, and of the poor decreased; for a woman, who sends her child to nurse as soon as it is born, has, or may have, a child every year; whereas she, who, after having suckled her own child, is obliged to take in another, cannot again bring forth a child in less than twenty-seven months, or perhaps three years. But a state is not so much enriched by the children of wealthy and independent parents, as by those of the poor; as the number required to govern and direct are few, in proportion to those who are to be governed and directed. May not this be one of the causes, why

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Great Britain sends abroad so many poor young gentlemen, resolutely determined to be rich? May it not also be one of the causes, why, at home, she is sometimes at a loss for labourers, and often for able-bodied men to man her fleets and recruit her armies? May it not, in time, produce such an increase of children to the rich, and so much decrease the poor, that we may become like the Spaniards? almost all gentlemen; too proud to work, and too poor to be idle.

WERE we to judge whether every woman should nurse her own children, from the practice of the females of other animals, we should certainly find it to be a duty from which she could hardly find any excuse to exempt herself; as almost the whole of the birds and the beasts perform this task to their own young*. Were we to judge of it from the history of man, we should find, that in almost all nations it has been the common practice; though to that practice, like all other general rules, there have been many exceptions. We have reason to believe, that the wives and concubines of the patriarchs constantly suckled their own children; the same custom obtained among the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Scythians, the Medes and Persians; and it invariably takes place at this day in every nation, where culture has not degenerated into vice, and where the voice of nature is stronger than that of pleasure.

WHAT at first gave rise to the custom of one woman suckling the child of another, must have been the death or sickness of the

* The Ostrich and the Cuckow do not hatch their eggs, nor take care of their young. The Ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, and they are hatched by the sun. The Cuckow lays them in the nest of another bird, who, mistaking them for her own, hatches them, and rears the young.

mother :

mother: indolence taking the hint from this, and willing to be excused from the toil of tending and suckling, devolved the important offices on slaves, and on mercenaries. When, or where, this became at first the practice, history has not informed us; we find it, however, to have been pretty general during many of the most flourishing ages of the Grecian states; almost every nation, and often every province, is peculiarly remarkable for some produce of its soil, or qualification of its inhabitants; the Spartan matrons had acquired the glory of being famous for nursing; they laid aside the use of swaddling-bands; a custom which had prevailed from the remotest antiquity; they used children to eat every sort of food; taught them not to be afraid when alone, or in the dark; and to relinquish these peevish and fretful humours, which often render them so troublesome and disagreeable: on these accounts, Spartan nurses were eagerly sought after, and hired by such as could afford them, into all the other states of Greece: several of the most eminent warriors and statesmen gloried in having been nursed by the matrons of Sparta. It was not, however, a general custom for the Grecian women to give their children out to nurse; their poets, as well as those of the Romans, frequently introduce their ladies of the first quality suckling, and taking care of their children; but as the Romans imitated the Greeks in almost all their manners and customs, as they became more alive to the feelings of luxury, and less to those of nature, they copied them also, in giving their infants to be suckled and taken care of by slaves and hired nurses, while they themselves rioted in all the pomp and extravagance of the richest and most extravagant city in the world.

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WHEN the frozen regions of the North poured out swarms of barbarians into the Roman empire, they overturned not only the whole system of Roman government, but also that of luxury and of pleasure; these being dissipated, nature resumed her empire, and infligated the women again to apply themselves to the task of suckling and rearing their own children. Several centuries elapsed amid the depopulations of war, and marked by ferocity of manners; when these gave place to the arts of peace and cultivation, luxury, and the love of pleasure, began to creep in, and women resumed the practice of putting their children to nurse, that they might have more time to bestow upon pleasure and amusement. The French and Italians, who have always taken the lead in fashion, set the first example; they were soon followed by Britain, and the other neighbouring nations, with such exactness, that, at present, there is scarcely to be found in Europe a woman of family and fashion who will take the trouble of nursing her own child; but happy were it, if the contagion ended among these, and did not spread itself to the middling ranks of life; who, fond of imitating their superiors, relinquish likewise the task of nursing, on various pretensions, that, like these superiors, they may dedicate themselves more freely to the rage of pleasure.

Amusements
and methods
of killing time
in Europe.

SUCH are the present employments of our women; but employment is not the mode of the times. In all the polite countries of Europe, these of rank and fashion, as well as those in decent circumstances, having an extraordinary portion of time upon their hands, with an almost irresistible inclination to pleasure in whatever form it offers itself, are more often to be met with at the shrine

shrine of amusement than of industry: and hence it has been commonly observed, that wherever there is a show, an entertainment, or a crowd, the women are more numerous than the men: but theatrical entertainments of all kinds; balls, assemblies, operas, ridottos, and particularly reviews, seem to be the scenes of their peculiar delight; because, perhaps, at these, they can not only indulge their natural propensity for show and ostentation, but find them also convenient places for love, or for intrigue. Riding, walking, sailing, and, in some countries of Europe, even skating, and being drawn on the ice in sledges, are female amusements. Besides these, and many others too tedious to mention, the women of fashion, in most parts of Europe, spend a great part of their time in receiving and returning visits; and in some of the politer nations, modern visiting is not spending a social hour together; it consists only in her ladyship ordering her coachman to drive to the doors of so many of her acquaintances, and her footman, at each of them, to give in a card with her name, while the lady of the house, though, in the polite phrase, not at home, is looking through the window all the time to see what passes; and in some convenient time after returns the visit, and is sure to be received in the same manner.

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SHOPPING, as it is called, is another fashionable female amusement; in order to which, two, three, or sometimes more ladies, accompanied by their gallants, set out to make a tour through the most fashionable shops, and to look at all the most fashionable goods, without any intention of laying out one single sixpence. After a whole forenoon spent in plaguing mercers and milliners, they return home, either thoughtless of their folly, or which, per-

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haps, is worse, exulting at the thoughts of the trouble and disturbance they have given.

BUT of all the happy inventions discovered by modern ingenuity for the killing of time, card-playing is justly entitled to the pre-eminence; with an immoderate itch for this amusement, which we are at a loss whether to reckon public or private, both sexes, and all ranks and degrees of people, are deeply infected; particularly indolent clergy, and women, who, having little to do, dedicate themselves so assiduously to play, that the habit is in many become so strong, as to be foolishly reckoned even necessary to their existence. To cards, when made use of only to unbend the mind fatigued with study, or to pass away an idle hour, we have no objection, nor do we flatter ourselves, that any thing we can say on the subject will, in the least, influence the conduct of such as are habituated to them. We would only, therefore, as we pass along, recommend to the ministers of religion, to set a watch over their tongues, while playing with bad success, lest an unguarded oath, or a few silly exclamations at a card-table, should do more hurt to religion, and to their sacred character, than they are aware of. To the fair, to the lovely virgins of this favourite island, when thus engaged, we would recommend the strictest care of their temper, lest something should escape from their lips, that may belie the soft, the bewitching appearance, with which nature has painted their exterior forms.

To the female diversions and amusements now mentioned, we might add many more; but as a bare recital of names, makes a dry and unentertaining page, and as a description of each would

be tedious and insipid, we shall only observe, in general, that such is human, and particularly female nature, when tutored by European art, that it constantly shews a greater proclivity to the gay and the amusive, than to the sober and useful scenes of life; and loves better to sport away time amid the flowers that strow the path of pleasure, than to be entangled among the briars and thorns which perplex the path of care. But notwithstanding this, we must do justice to the sex, in asserting, that as their attachments are always stronger than those of the men, such of them as attach themselves to œconomy and industry, pursue their plan with a steady and inflexible constancy, which male nature perhaps is incapable of arriving at; and are neither to be tempted to deviate from it by the hope of pleasure, nor by the fear of danger and of pain.

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Of the Treatment and Condition of Women, and the various Advantages and Disadvantages of their Sex, in savage and civil Life.

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Thoughts on
the condition
of women.

THERE is in the fate of women something exceedingly singular; they have at all periods, and almost in all countries, been, by our sex, constantly oppressed and adored. And what renders their case still more extraordinary, is, that we have not oppressed, because we hated, but because we loved them. We have not in Asia and Africa confined them; because, like the lion and the tyger, we were afraid of their depredations; but because we were unwilling that any body should share with us the pleasure and enjoyment of their company. We have not in Europe assumed almost the sole management of affairs, because we were afraid that they would manage them to our prejudice, but only to save them the trouble of thought and of labour, and to enable them to live in ease and elegance.

SUCH, however, is not the condition of women in those states approaching the nearest to savage barbarity; there, they have not attained consequence enough even to merit confinement; and far less, to merit that exemption from labour and perpetual guardianship, by which, in Europe, they are complimented and chained. As strength and courage are in savage life the only means of attaining to power and distinction, so weakness and timidity are the certain

certain paths to slavery and oppression: on this account, we shall almost constantly find women among savages condemned to every species of servile, or rather, of slavish drudgery; and shall as constantly find them emerging from this state, in the same proportion as we find the men emerging from ignorance and brutality, and approaching to knowledge and refinement; the rank, therefore, and condition, in which we find women in any country, mark out to us with the greatest precision, the exact point in the scale of civil society, to which the people of such country have arrived; and were their history entirely silent on every other subject, and only mentioned the manner in which they treated their women, we would, from thence, be enabled to form a tolerable judgment of the barbarity, or culture of their manners.

THERE is hardly any thing more natural to the rude and uncultivated mind, than to consider strength as giving unlimited right to whatever it can conquer; it is one of the first ideas which is derived from attention to the whole of the brute animals; every one of which constantly appropriates to itself, any thing it can take from a weaker being of the same, or of any other species. Whether the human mind has in its rude and barbarous state the same innate idea of right, or whether it has borrowed that idea from the other animals, is uncertain; but it appears from history, that every savage people either have it from nature or from imitation; and thence undoubtedly arose at first the barbarous custom of enslaving and treating with the utmost severity that sex which nature had formed, not to force, but to charm us into a proper behaviour towards them: but though among people of savage and uncultivated manners, this natural weakness of the sex, has subjected them to almost every species of indignity and ill usage;
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among the civil and polite, it has had a very different effect : these, disdaining to take the advantage of weakness, and rather considering it as intitled to their protection and indulgence, have, from generosity of principle, raised women to a rank and condition, in many cases superior even to that enjoyed by themselves ; and this merely in condescension to their weakness : but as we shall have occasion afterwards to mention the causes of the ill treatment of the sex, we shall at present proceed to take a view of their progress from slavery to freedom, and to mark the various causes which have more or less accelerated or retarded that progress.

Condition of
women in the
patriarchal
ages.

THIS enquiry we shall begin with the condition of women among the ancient patriarchs, a condition which we shall find to have been but extremely indifferent. When Abraham entertained the angels sent to denounce the destruction of Sodom, he appears to have treated his wife as a menial servant : “ Make ready quickly,” said he to her, “ three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth.” And from the sequel of the story it is plain, that she was not admitted to partake of the entertainment she had dressed : In ages so remote as these we are now considering, the imperfect and mutilated accounts from which alone we can draw any information, sometimes relate incidents which have so little resemblance to the manners and customs of our times, that we are altogether at a loss how to account for them. Though Sarah officiated as a servant in preparing this entertainment, she had at the same time one, or rather, perhaps, several handmaids or maid-servants under her, but in what they were employed, or how they served their mistresses, we can only conjecture.

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WE have already observed, that among nations but little cultivated, power is constantly made use of as a means to enslave; and from this principle we must derive the ill-treatment of the Israelitish women, and the abuse of their captives. In the whole early history of that people, there is hardly one instance of a woman having been treated with indulgence, or of a captive having experienced humanity.

IN many parts of the East, water is only to be met with deep in the earth, and the drawing of it from the wells consequently fatiguing and laborious. Such, however, was the task of the daughters of Jethro the Midianite, to whom so little regard was paid, either on account of the rank of their father, as high-priest of the country, or on account of their own sex, that the neighbouring shepherds not only insulted them, but forcibly took from them the water they had drawn. Such was the task of Rebecca, who not only drew water for Abraham's servant, but for his camels also; while the servant stood an idle spectator of the toil; and what makes his behaviour appear the more extraordinary is, that his circumstances at that time were these, in which men who have any sensibility generally exert their utmost efforts to please and become acceptable: he was on an embassy to court the damsel for Isaac his master's son. When he had concluded his bargain, and was carrying her home, we meet with another circumstance which strongly marks the inferiority of women in the times we are now considering. When she first approached Isaac, who had walked out into the fields to meet them, she did it in the most submissive manner, as if she had been approaching a lord and master rather than a fond and passionate lover; from which, as well as from several other parts of the sacred history, it

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would seem that women, instead of endeavouring, as in modern times, to persuade the world that they confer an immense favour on a lover by deigning to accept of him, made no difficulty of confessing that the obligation was conferred on themselves*. When Jacob went to visit his uncle Laban, a man of considerable property, he met Rachel, Laban's daughter, in the fields, attending on the flocks of her father; and in a much later period, Tamar, one of the daughters of king David, was sent by her father to perform the servile office of making cakes for her brother Amnon. And still later than this, the queen of Jeroboam king of Israel, went in person, perhaps on foot or on an ass, to consult an old prophet. The simplicity of the times in which these things happened, take off a great deal from their weight, and make them prove less than they would otherwise do; but in spite of that simplicity, they still make it appear, that women were not then treated even with the rudiments of that delicacy they have happily experienced in ages, and among people more polished and refined.

Proofs of this
condition.

BUT should the simplicity of the times be admitted as a full excuse for what we have now mentioned, there are other proofs that women were treated in an indignant manner, which can admit of no such excuse, as they appear to have been deliberation enforced by law. Husbands had a discretionary power of divorcing their wives, without assigning any other reason for it than that they were not agreeable to them; and as if such a power over the bodies of women had not been a circumstance sufficiently humiliating to the sex, they had another power of an extraordi-

* This was the case with Ruth, who had laid her down at the feet of Boaz; and being asked by him who she was, answered, "I am Ruth thine handmaid; spread, therefore, thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman."

nary nature over their minds also. Husbands and fathers were authorized to annul and make void even the most solemn vows of their wives and daughters, provided such vows were not made in the hearing of these husbands and fathers; in which case, if they did not immediately enter their dissent, they were considered as parties who had approved of these vows, and could not set them aside afterward. Was not this plainly declaring that women were beings of a nature so inferior as not to be capable of entering properly into any solemn or religious engagements for themselves? That in some cases a kind of public contempt was thrown on the sex, seems to appear from the law concerning child-bed purification, by which it was enacted, That she who had brought forth a female child, should not be accounted clean in less than sixty-six days; whereas she who had brought forth a male, was clean in half that time. As no natural reason can be assigned for such a law, it has generally been thought expressive of that contempt and degradation which, in the times we are delineating, was thrown on the sex, as an inferior order of beings.

To the proofs we have already brought of the despicable condition of women among the nations we have mentioned, we may add the universal customs of polygamy and concubinage, both of them impositions, contrary to the inclination of the sex, and practices which wound so deeply the delicacy of their feelings, that we cannot suppose any woman voluntarily to agree to them, even where they are sanctified by custom and by law. Wherever, therefore, they take place, we may assure ourselves that women have but little or no authority, and have scarcely arrived at any consequence in society. In such a condition of the sex we do not expect to find any of them rising into great esteem, and far less

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to the supreme power; circumstances which, however, even contrary to all appearances, we sometimes meet with. A wise woman, as she is called in scripture, saved the city of Abel, by prevailing on the inhabitants to cut off the head of Sheba, and throw it over the wall to Joab, who thereupon retired with his army. And Deborah, a prophetess, had been raised to the dignity of judging Israel, a dignity which she maintained for several years; the exaltation of these, and of others, into conditions so different from the rest of their sex, is, perhaps, not to be accounted for upon any other principle than the power of superstition, which readily believed that every glimmering of knowledge, and every superior attainment, were inspirations of the divinity; and taught the people that to the direction of those, whom they supposed thus inspired, they should yield themselves up to be governed with the most implicit confidence.

Condition of
the Egyptian
women.

FROM the ancient people of Israel, and the nations around them, where women were treated with so much indignity and contempt; let us turn our eyes towards the Egyptians, whom we shall find, on the contrary, using them with a complaisance and humanity which would have done honour to the most enlightened ages. As these people were situated in the midst of nations, who in this particular shewed them so ill an example, before we proceed to the facts, let us enquire into the causes which produced them.

Causes of this
condition.

WHEREVER the human race live solitary and unconnected with each other, they are savage and barbarous; wherever they associate together, that association becomes productive of softer manners, and a more engaging deportment. While people in the neighbourhood of

Egypt were allowed, by their situation, in every season, to roam about at pleasure, and while their woods and their rivers afforded them the means of constantly subsisting themselves by hunting and fishing; the Egyptians, from the nature of their country, annually overflowed by the Nile, had no wild beasts to hunt, nor could then procure any thing by fishing; on these accounts they were under a necessity of applying themselves to agriculture, a kind of life which naturally brings mankind together for mutual convenience and assistance; but, besides, they were every year, during the inundation of the river, obliged to assemble themselves together, and take shelter either on the rising grounds, or in the houses which were raised upon piles above the reach of the waters; here the men and the women being constantly in the company of each other, and almost every employment totally suspended, a thousand inducements, not to be found in a solitary state, would naturally prompt them to render themselves agreeable to each other, and hence their manners would begin more early to assume a softer polish, and more elegant refinement, than those of the other nations who surrounded them.

FROM this early society, where the men first became acquainted with the intrinsic merit of the sex, and where they on their part had an opportunity of exerting every power, and displaying every charm that could please; they soon came to be treated in a manner widely different from the women of any of the neighbouring nations. We have already related from Herodotus, that they were employed in agriculture, and in merchandise; but there is great reason to believe, that if any of them were employed in agriculture, it was only those of the meanest condition, and that in general they were exempted from performing any of
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the laborious tasks, commonly assigned them by barbarians; a thing which to us appears to be demonstrated from the whole of the conduct of their men towards them, and which receives an additional proof from the story of Pfammenitus, one of their kings; who, being made prisoner at the reduction of Memphis, was with the chief of his nobility placed on an eminence near the city, while his own daughter, and the rest of the captive women were ordered to bear water in pitchers from the river; which so mortified the king, that he is said to have felt more on that occasion than for the loss of his liberty and kingdom; but, had this been a common custom in Egypt, as we have already seen it among all the neighbouring nations, it could not have been chosen as the most eligible mode of adding to the sorrows of the distressed monarch. What we every day see or perform loses all power of affecting us, however degrading in its nature; while something which we have not been used to, though less degrading, awakes our keenest sensations, and stings our hearts with the sharpest affliction.

Egyptian
women not
confined.

We shall afterwards have occasion to mention, that in a very early period the practice of confining women was introduced into the East; this practice, however, instituted by the rage of jealousy, and maintained by unlawful power, was never adopted by the Egyptians, as appears from the story of Pharaoh's daughter, who was going with her train of maids to bathe in the river, when she found Moses hid among the reeds; and also from that of the wife of Potiphar, who, if confined in the manner of the East, could not have found the opportunities she did to solicit Joseph to her adulterous embrace. To these testimonies of the sacred scripture we may add the authority of Herodotus,

dotus, and some of the other writers on ancient Egypt, who, besides mentioning several anecdotes which could not have happened to women in harems and seraglios, generally agree that they were equal, if not superior, in authority to the men; and if they were, it would be inconsistent to think that they allowed themselves to be shut up and deprived of society, by beings who neither had, nor claimed any superiority over them.

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THE men in Egypt were not allowed to indulge in polygamy, a state which always presupposes women to be slaves. The chastity of virgins was protected by a law of the severest nature; he who committed a rape on a free woman, had his privities cut off, that it might be out of his power ever to perpetrate the like crime, and that others might be terrified by so dreadful a punishment. Concubinage, as well as polygamy, seems either not to have been lawful, or at least not fashionable; it was a liberty, however, in which their kings were sometimes indulged, for we find when Sesostris set out on his expedition to conquer the world, he left the government of the kingdom to his brother, with full power over every thing, except the royal diadem, the queen, and royal concubines. The queens of Egypt are said to have been much more honoured, as well as more readily obeyed than the kings; and it is also related, that the husbands were in their marriage-contracts obliged to promise obedience to their wives; a thing which in our modern times we are often obliged to perform, though our wives entered into the promise.

Laws and
customs in
their favour.

BUT nothing can exhibit the power and consequence of the Egyptian women in a stronger light than a law, by which it was ordained, That daughters and not sons should provide for their
parents

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parents when they became aged or indigent. And we shall only add further, that the honour and respect paid to them, above those of other nations, likewise appears from the behaviour of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon had many other wives besides this princess, and was married to several of them before her, which according to the Jewish law ought to have entitled them to a kind of preference; but such was not the case, for we hear of no particular palace having been built for any of the others, nor of the worship of any of their gods having been introduced into Jerusalem; while for Pharaoh's daughter a magnificent palace was erected, and she permitted, though expressly contrary to the Jewish law, to worship the gods of her own country; circumstances which we cannot believe would have happened, had not the regard of the Egyptians for their women prompted them to have it stipulated with Solomon in the marriage agreement. But loaded with all the honours and preferments we have mentioned, invested often with the sovereign power, as well as the management of their own families; the fair sex were sometimes reached by superstition, that frenzy of the human mind, which neither regards the laws of nature nor of nations; a virgin was at certain times sacrificed to Annubis.

BESIDES the privilege of succeeding to the throne itself, in default of male issue, the Egyptian daughters had a right of succession to the paternal inheritance of their fathers; a right hardly to be met with in any of the neighbouring countries, where women were too much despised to be admitted to inherit what they could not defend. With this rule the inheritance of the sovereign authority was not thought so inconsistent, as every subject is concerned in defending his country in general, while the defence of
private

private property rests more immediately on the arm of the proprietor. In an early period of the history of the Assyrians and Babylonians, we also find women creeping into such consequence as to share with their husbands, and sometimes to assume to themselves the whole of the royal authority; though we have reason to believe, that, at the same time, they could not inherit the estates of their ancestors.

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WHILE Ninus, king of Assyria, was besieging Bactria, it is said that the attempt would have failed, had it not been for the assistance of Semiramis, then wife of one of his principal officers, who planned a method of attacking the city, with such superior skill, that he soon became master of it. Ninus being attracted by the beauty and art of this virago, soon became passionately fond of her; in the mean time, her husband foreseeing that this passion would end in his destruction, to avoid falling a victim to licentious despotism, privately put an end to his life. The main obstacle being thus removed, Ninus took the adulteress to wife, an action of which, according to some authors, he had soon reason to repent, for she having first brought over to her interest the principal men of the state, next prevailed on her silly husband to invest her for the space of five days with the sovereign power; a decree was accordingly issued, that all the provinces should implicitly obey her during that time; which having obtained, she began the exercise of her sovereignty, by putting to death the too indulgent husband who had conferred it on her, and so securing to herself the kingdom. Other authors have denied that Ninus committed this rash, or Semiramis this execrable deed, but all agree that she succeeded her husband at his death, in whatever manner it happened. Seeing herself at the

Assyrian women, how treated.

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head of a mighty empire, and struck with the love of magnificence and of fame, she proposed to render her name immortal, by performing something that should far surpass all that had been done by her predecessors: the scheme she fell upon, was to build, in the space of one year, the mighty city of Babylon; which being finished within the proposed time, greatly exceeded in magnificence any thing the world had ever seen: two millions of men are said to have been constantly employed on it, during the time it was erecting.

FROM the advancement of Semiramis to the Assyrian empire, it would seem that, at least, some decent degree of personal liberty was one of the prerogatives of the women of that country; for wherever the sex are strictly confined by their fathers and husbands, we can hardly suppose their political existence to have been such as could form a party sufficient to bring about a total revolution of state; and in the East they are commonly considered as beings too weak and insignificant, ever to be allowed the privilege of mounting a throne, unless aided by the power of superstition, or the notion of a right derived from their gods. But though the Assyrian women seem, in general, to have enjoyed some liberty, yet their monarchs, according to the custom of their neighbours, had seraglios, where such ladies as belonged to them were probably more strictly confined than the other women of the country.

THAT seraglios were a part of the magnificence of the Assyrian monarchs, appears from several anecdotes in their history, and particularly from the story of Sardanapalus, who, instead of employing his time in the affairs of government, dedicated himself

entirely to debauchery among his women, affecting not only the softness and effeminacy of their voice and manners, but learning also to handle the distaff, and amuse himself by working in the other trifles with which they were employed. As we have already seen that, in the earlier ages, women of the greatest rank and quality were not ashamed to perform those offices, which, in our times, would be considered as beneath the dignity of their waiting-maids, we are not to be surprised, that the women of the august monarch of Assyria should employ themselves in spinning; but that the effeminate monarch himself, who had business and pleasure, in so many shapes, at his command, should take up the distaff for his amusement, not only excites our astonishment, but our contempt; and strongly marks the littleness of that mind, which, surrounded with such a variety, could select a diversion so insignificant, as well as unbecoming. We may, perhaps, account for this, by observing, that women of talents, superior to the rest of their sex, generally associate with men, and despise the company of women as trifling and insignificant; and that men of inferior talents, finding themselves generally despised by the men; on that account associate with women. This observation, besides pointing out the reason why Sardanapalus confined himself, almost altogether, to the seraglio, likewise discovers the reason why Semiramis arrived at the royal diadem of Assyria; an elevation which, though it did honour to the sex in general, yet did not prove that they had, in general, attained to that importance to which they are entitled, by the place which they hold in the scale of rational beings; for, throughout the whole continent of Asia, women have been, from time immemorial, and still are, considered either as public or private property, and sold to such husbands as would give the highest price for them: in Assyria, the former of

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these was the custom; women being there the property of the state, and by the magistrates disposed of in marriage to the best bidder, by way of public auction. We are of opinion, that this custom, or law, took place after the reign of Semiramis; so that though, in her time, the sex might be on a more respectable footing, it seems that the privileges they then enjoyed, were afterward almost entirely wrested from them by the men.

IN an early period of the world, while as yet women had attained to little dignity and consequence, we find an universal notion of female, as well as of male deities, had obtained among mankind; this notion did not arise solely from the polytheism of the times, but also from an opinion that the gods propagated their species, which mortals could not conceive them capable of doing in any other way than that of mortal men. All antiquity demonstrates it to have been a general opinion, that the gods often cohabited with, and had children by the daughters of men; which children were reckoned partakers of a divine nature in their lifetime; and after their death were worshipped as real deities. But Semiramis is the first woman, we believe, who had influence enough, without pretending to any divine original, to procure the honour of deification after her death; to have temples erected, and the worship of a goddess addressed to her by a numerous crowd of adorers. By what means she procured this distinction, in a period, and a country where women were not considered as of much importance, we are not told: while alive, an absolute monarch may easily command the obedience of subjects in civil matters, but in those of religion, even the severest despot is often incapable of introducing any change. It is, therefore, the more

extraordinary, that Semiramis had influence enough to introduce, after her death, what few monarchs have attempted with success when living. We are aware, that when the custom of paying divine honours to illustrious persons after death became universal, it was no very difficult matter to be ranked among the gods, but to introduce the custom of conferring that dignity on a sex, which were then so little distinguished, must have been owing to superior talents and abilities.

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AMONG the Babylonians, who were at first a part of the Assyrian empire, and afterwards became their own masters, women were, probably, of much greater importance than in Assyria. The whole history of mankind, as well as what we see among the uncultivated nations of our own times, assures us, that where women have attained to little or no importance in society, and are only considered as the servile instruments of supplying our wants, and gratifying our passions, there is but little care taken, either to adorn their minds, or their bodies. Among the Babylonians, though we are not informed what care was taken of the female mind, from a variety of scattered hints, which particularly abound in the prophets of the Old Testament, we may infer, that the greatest attention was bestowed in decorating and adorning their bodies, with every costly ornament which fondness could invent, and affluence supply: incontestible proofs that they were objects of no small importance, and the peculiar care of the men. But further, the Babylonians were a wise and cultivated people; and we may with truth assert, that proper culture of the human mind has never yet existed, without extending itself to the interests and conveniences of the fair sex.

Of the Baby-
lonian wo-
men.

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THAT some of the queens of Babylon were more regarded, and of greater consequence than is common to the herd of women confined in the seraglios of eastern monarchs, appears from the story of Nitocris, consort of Nabonadius, known in scripture by the name of Evil Merodach : while Nabonadius, neglecting the affairs of his kingdom, devoted himself entirely to scenes of the most voluptuous debauchery, Nitocris took upon her the care of the state, and managed it so as to give universal satisfaction ; a circumstance, which was not likely to have happened, had not women possessed a tolerable share of public esteem and confidence ; which, when we consider the influence of female society among the Babylonians ; and that their women were admitted to convivial meetings, where they lived in a free and unrestrained manner, with more frequent opportunities than their neighbours of exerting the various arts of pleasing ; and, consequently, of gaining that ascendancy which will ever fall to the share of beauty and of sense, will appear not to have been so difficult for them to attain, as for the women of the surrounding nations. But notwithstanding of this general importance, such of the Babylonish women as were poor, like the poor of every country, were destined to attend on, and minister to the pleasures of the rich ; who, at their meals, were served by a great number of eunuchs, and singing and dancing girls, carefully selected from the fairest and handsomest of the country. When the Babylonians became poor, by the ruin of their metropolis, fathers prostituted their daughters for gain, and husbands, who had formerly been hindered from using their wives ill, by a particular law, then broke through every restraint ; and, it is said, even compelled them to offer themselves to strangers for hire.

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CONCERNING the condition of the Scythian women we know little; only that they, as well as those of the Gauls and Germans, were anciently held in great esteem for their skill in divination: we know not whether it was on account of this esteem, or because they were thought weak and inoffensive, that in some cases the Scythian women were treated with more lenity than the men. By one of their laws, when a father was put to death, all his sons suffered the same fate along with him, while the daughters escaped with impunity. These people, the most plain and simple of all antiquity, being reproached with cowardice, for retreating from their desert frontiers, before an army much superior to their own: "In those desolate wastes, said they, we have nothing worth fighting for; but when you arrive at the tombs of our ancestors, and the habitations of our women, you shall see whether we can defend them."

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Scythian women treated with indulgence.

FROM the accounts handed down to us of the Phœnicians, they appear to have been long a flourishing and prosperous people, who had acquired great riches by their superior skill in commerce and navigation; we may therefore reasonably suppose, that, in a country, whose inhabitants were so far advanced in the arts of civil life, the women had attained to that importance we generally find them possessed of in such countries; especially when we consider the attention that was paid to ornamenting them, by all the finery that an extensive trade could purchase from every part of the globe. But though the Phœnicians spared no cost in adorning their women with all the elegance of the times, they appear to have stamped upon them one mark of inferiority and subordination; they did not allow them to wear the Tyrian purple, so famous in those days; not only on account of its high price, but also

Their privileges in some other nations.

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also as a badge of distinction solely appropriated to men ; and to such of them only as were of the first rank and dignity, though not then, as it was afterwards, altogether confined to royalty. In the Balearic Isles, of whose history we have now but a few scattered hints in some of the Greek writers, so far were they from fixing any mark of inferiority on the fair sex, that when any of their women were taken captive, they gave three or four men in exchange for her ; a conduct so singular, that some particular reason for it must have existed, of which we are not informed ; perhaps it was only done at the first planting of some colony, while the women, as in the origin of Rome, were few and valuable. Among the Lycians, a people of the Lesser Asia, a custom also obtained ; which, at first view, seems to exalt the women to a consequence much superior to that of the men. In their sex alone was the fountain of honour and nobility, insomuch that if a woman of quality married a plebeian, their issue were noble ; but if a nobleman married a foreigner or peasant, the children, in that case, were only plebeians. But this custom, when more nearly examined, will be found to have originated from a different motive than love or esteem ; it is at this day practised in some parts of America ; and the reason there given for it is, because they are sure who is the mother of a child ; and that the noble or royal blood of a family may, on her side, be easily preserved ; whereas they have no certainty who is the father ; and by the incontinence of a wife, the noble or royal blood may, on the male side, be totally extinguished.

Of the Phœ-
nicians.

IF the Phœnicians treated their women with propriety, we may reasonably expect to find nearly the same customs concerning them transplanted into Carthage ; as the Carthaginians were originally
a colo-

a colony from Tyre, the capital of Phœnicia. As there was something uncommon in the origin of this colony, and as it was founded by a woman, whose name has been immortalised by Virgil, and not unknown even to the generality of female readers, we hope it will not be deemed altogether foreign to our subject to give a short account of it.

WHILE Tyre flourished in all the pomp of magnificence, as the capital of the Phœnician empire, and the most renowned commercial city in the world, Pygmalion, being king, had a sister, called Eliza, but known to us by the name of Dido; which sister he married to Sichæus, one of their own relations. Sichæus was possessed of great riches, which Pygmalion avariciously coveting, put him to death, that they might fall into his hands. Dido, detesting this execrable deed of her brother, and desirous to disappoint him of that wealth, which had been the cause of it, cunningly amused him, till she had got all things in readiness; and then privately eloped with the most valuable effects of her murdered husband. After a long series of disastrous events, she at last landed on the coast of the Mediterranean, at a little distance from the place where the piratical city of Tunis now stands: there, having purchased some land of the natives, she settled a colony of such as had adhered to, and followed her fortune.

Soon after this settlement, the inhabitants of the country, invited by a prospect of gain, resorted to the strangers with the necessaries of life, and such other commodities as were most wanted: finding themselves always civilly treated, they at last gradually incorporated with them into one people. The citizens of Utica, being their ancient neighbours, began also to consider

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them as countrymen; and sent ambassadors, with considerable presents, exhorting them to build a city on the place where they had first landed; this proposal being agreeable to the secret wishes of Dido, and her infant colony, the city was begun, and called Carthada, or Carthage; which, in the Phœnician language, signifies the New City.

WHAT Virgil has related concerning this first queen of Carthage, is only to be considered as a poetical fiction; for it appears that she lived at least two hundred years before the time of his hero Æneas, and at last finished her days, not as he represents, a victim to love, but to that kind of conjugal fidelity then in fashion, which considered it as criminal to marry a second husband; for, being courted by Jarbas, king of Getulia, and threatened with war in consequence of a refusal; and having bound herself by an oath to Sichæus, never to consent to a second marriage, and unwilling to bring a powerful invasion on her infant colony; to extricate herself from the difficulty, she ascended and leapt into a funeral pile which she had caused her subjects to erect, unconscious of the purpose to which she intended to apply it.

AMONG a people whose political existence was owing to a woman, and to one who in her life had conducted them with so much prudence, and at her death made so disinterested a sacrifice to procure their safety; it is natural to imagine that the sex would be treated with more deference and regard, than was common in the periods we are reviewing. Accordingly, we have several reasons to believe, that the women of Carthage were not, as in many other countries, obliged to do all the servile drudgery which

which naturally belonged to the men; nor to submit themselves to any kind of slavish subjection under that sex. That the Carthaginians on the contrary had sentiments of a more elevated nature concerning their women, appears from a story related of them by Diodorus, the Sicilian. When the city of Tyre was besieged by Alexander the Great, the Tyrians being reduced to the utmost extremity, sent an embassy to the Carthaginians imploring their assistance; the Carthaginians being at the same time engaged in a war with the Athenians, and scarcely in a condition to make head against Agathocles, the Athenian general, were not able to grant that assistance they so earnestly wished to give; and to soften the refusal, they agreed to receive into Carthage all the wives and children of their friends the Tyrians; that they, at least, might escape the outrages which their sex generally suffer at the plundering of a city.

It is the characteristic of the men in every enlightened nation to treat the weaker sex with lenity and indulgence; to this they are prompted, not only by the softer sensations instilled by nature, but also by that additional humanity, and those finer feelings, which are commonly the result of knowledge; and which raise the mind above what is mean, and inspire it only with what is generous and noble. Hence, whenever we find a people treating their women with propriety, we may, without any further knowledge of their history, conclude that their minds are not uncultivated. When we find them cultivated, we may conclude, that they treat their women with propriety. We shall only add, therefore, concerning the Carthaginians, that the character they bore for wisdom, for learning, and the arts, leave us no room to

C H A P. V. doubt that they behaved to the fair-sex in general, as became a people so highly distinguished.

Perſian women, how treated.

SOME of the Greek and ſeveral of the Roman hiſtorians, in mentioning the ancient Perſians, have dwelt with peculiar ſeverity on the manner in which they treated their women; jealous, almoſt to diſtraction, though not under the influence of a vertical ſun, they confined the whole ſex with the ſtricteſt attention, and could not bear that the eye of a ſtranger ſhould behold the beauty whom they adored. Their monarchs placed almoſt the whole of their grandeur, and of their enjoyment, in the number and beauty of the women of their ſeraglios; which they carefully ſelected from among the faireſt, either taken captive in war, or produced by their own dominions, and purified them for their uſe by a long and tedious preparation, tending to heighten the beauties of nature, and to give an agreeable reliſh to their perſons; a preparation luxuriouſly voluptuous, beyond any thing that modern refinement has ever ſuggeſted. Agreeable to an obſervation we made in the beginning of this chapter, every circumſtance in the Perſian hiſtory tends to perſuade us, that the motive which induced them to confine their women with ſo much care and ſolicitude, was only exuberance of love and affection; in the enjoyment of their ſmiles, and their embraces, the happineſs of the men conſiſted, and their approbation was an incentive to deeds of glory and of heroiſm; for theſe reaſons, they are ſaid to have been the firſt who introduced the cuſtom of carrying their wives and concubines to the field, “ That the
“ fight, ſaid they, of all that is dear to us, may animate us to
“ fight more valiantly in their defence.” To offer the leaſt
violence,

violence, even in appearance, to a Persian woman, was to incur certain death from her husband or guardian; nay, even their kings, though the most absolute in the universe, could not alter the manners or customs of the country which concerned them, as appears from Cabas, a licentious monarch, who, not satisfied with the numerous beauties of his seraglio, thought he could introduce the community of women, which would afford him an ample opportunity of satiating his unbounded lust; and therefore issued a decree, commanding the promiscuous use of all the women of his dominions, whether married or unmarried; upon which his subjects rose in a rebellion that ended in expelling him from the throne. Upon the whole, we may infer that the Persians loved their women with the utmost violence of animal appetite; but had not learned to treat them with that softness and good nature, which culture and civilization can only dictate.

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NOTWITHSTANDING of this private jealousy and confinement of the sex, it would seem that there were at the Persian court women who were introduced on certain occasions, and with whom every freedom might be used, as we learn from the story of Megabyfus, one of the governors of Darius; who having sent some Persian noblemen to Amintas, king of Macedon, to require him to do homage to his master, Amintas having complied with the request, gave them a splendid entertainment. Towards the conclusion of it they desired that, according to the custom of their country, the women might be brought in, to which, though contrary to the custom of the Greeks, the king consented. The Persians heated with wine, and thinking they might behave to the Grecian princesses as to the women of Persia, began to take some indecent freedoms; the son of Amintas, affronted at the

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the treatment of his sisters, told the Persians, that if they would allow the women, in compliance with the custom of Greece, to retire and habit themselves in a loose manner, they would then return, and every one might chuse his partner for the night. The Persians gladly consented to this proposal, the women retired, the prince dressed some of the most comely of his young warriors in loose female habits, with poinards under their cloaths, and brought them into the room instead of the women, as soon as the Persians had each fixed upon his partner, on a signal from the prince, every one drew his poinard, and slaughtered the whole of them on the spot.

Of the Sybarites.

BEFORE we take leave of these dark and unenlightened periods, we have been running over, where the historic page hardly affords even the glimmering of a taper to direct us on our way, we must observe, that there are many other ancient people and nations whom we might have mentioned, but have passed over them in silence, because we are hardly acquainted with any thing but their names; or, at most, with a few of their warlike exploits and remarkable revolutions. We cannot help, however, making a few observations on the Sybarites, the most remarkable people of antiquity.

The Sybarites, from the imperfect accounts we have of them, placed the whole of their happiness in indolence, eating, finery, and women. Their bodies were so much relaxed with sloth, and their minds with voluptuousness, that the greatest affront that could be offered to any one, was to call him a Sybarite, an appellation, which comprehended in it almost every human crime, and every human folly. In grottoes, cooled with fountains, their youth

youth spent a great part of their time in scenes of debauchery, amid women, either elegantly adorned by art, or sometimes reduced to a state of nature. Women of the first quality, though not disposed of by auction, were treated in a manner somewhat similar; they were given as a reward to him who, in contending for them, shewed the greatest splendour and magnificence. When any great entertainment was designed, the women, who were to make a part of the company, were invited a year before, that they might have time to appear in all the lustre of beauty and of dress; a circumstance which plainly proves that they did not, as some other nations, value the sex only as objects of sensual pleasure, but as objects which added elegance to their scenes of magnificence and grandeur; and, perhaps, because they excelled the men in softness and effeminacy, qualities upon which they set the greatest value, and cultivated with the utmost assiduity.—These people, after having been for many centuries the contempt of the universe, were at last shamefully driven from their country, and entirely dispersed by the Crotonians.

CHAP. VI.

The same Subject continued.

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VI.
Of the Greek
women.

IN the last chapter we finished the few cursory observations we could make on those ages which lie hid in the darkness of the most remote antiquity, we now come to these of the Greeks; a people whose fame has been so much trumpeted, that we are apt to annex the idea of every virtue to their name, to consider them as highly polished and civilized, and consequently to expect that, amongst them, the fair sex were treated with that indulgence, and raised to that dignity, which they commonly enjoy in nations the farthest advanced in the arts of culture and refinement: But here we shall be much mistaken; for though the Greeks were a people severely virtuous in whatever regarded their country, they were far from being tender and humane, and hardly knew any of those soft blandishments which smooth the asperity of rugged male nature; and which, while they render us more agreeable to the women, are only to be acquired in their company.

It is observed by an able panegyrist for the fair, that one of the greatest proofs of their intrinsic worth and excellence is, that the greatest esteem and respect has always been paid them by the wisest and best of nations. Granting this to be a fact, it follows, that the Greeks forfeited one great claim to that wisdom which has always been attributed to them; for we have good reason to believe that they regarded their women only as instruments of raising

raising up members to the state : considering them in the same cool, dispassionate, and we may add, unsocial light, as they considered their fields which produced the corn whereby the members of that state were fed. But lest we should be suspected of partiality, let us attend to some of the proofs of what we have advanced.

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THE animal appetite towards the other sex, is implanted in ours by nature, and arises at sight ; but in order to esteem, to regard women, we must do more than see, we must, by social intercourse and a mutual reciprocation of good offices, become acquainted with their worth and excellence : this, to the Greeks, was a pleasure totally unknown ; custom had introduced, and law had established, the mode of obliging women to live retired in their own apartments, scarcely ever allowing them to appear in public, or have any open intercourse with the men ; so that, if they had any amiable qualities, they were buried in perpetual obscurity : even their husbands being in some of the * states limited as to the times and duration of the visits made to their wives, and it being the custom at meals for the two sexes always to eat separately.

Confined to
their apart-
ments.

THE apartments destined for the women, in order to keep them more private, were always in the back, and generally in the upper part of the house. The famous Helen is said to have had her chamber in the loftiest part of it, and so wretched were their dwellings, that even Penelope queen of Ulysses seems to have descended from hers by means of a ladder ; within these, however, women, especially such as had no husbands, whether maids or

* This was the case at Sparta.

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widows, were closely confined; the former in so strict a manner that they could not pass without leave from one part of the house to another, lest they should be seen; which, as we learn from the story of Antigone, would have been a reflection on their honour, as well as on the care and integrity of their guardians. New-married women were almost as strictly confined as virgins; for we find Hermione severely reprov'd by her old duenna, for appearing out of doors; a freedom, which, she tells her, was not usually taken by women in her situation, and which would endanger her reputation, should she happen to be seen; and we are further informed by Menander, that the door was the utmost limit allowed to the freedom of a married woman: it appears, however, from some other authors, that after they had brought forth a child, this severity was a little relaxed; but it was then owing only to the indulgence of their husbands, who, perhaps, thought them now either more prudent, or less the objects of temptation; and might still, if they pleas'd, retain them in the same rigorous confinement, as we learn from Aristophanes; who introduces an Athenian lady, loudly complaining, because women were confined to their chambers, under lock and key, and guarded, says she, by mastiffs, goblins, or any thing that can frighten away admirers.

Cause of their
confinement.

THOUGH the Grecian women lived thus separated from the men, yet they were not, like those of Asia, confined to seraglios, and oblig'd to share among a great number the scanty favours of one man. Nor does their confinement appear in some cases to have been so much the effect of jealousy, as of indifference; the men did not think them proper companions; and that ignorance, which is the common result of a recluse life, gave them too good reason

reason to think so. Nothing in Greece was held in estimation, but valour and eloquence; nature had disqualified the fair sex for both; they were therefore considered as mean and contemptible beings, much beneath the notice of heroes and of orators, who seldom favoured them with their company, unless prompted by nature, or by the desire of propagating future orators and heroes like themselves. Thus deserted by a sex, which ought to be the source of knowledge, the understandings of the women were but shallow, and their company uninteresting; a case which invariably happens in every country where the two sexes have little communication with each other.

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BUT confinement was not the greatest evil which the Grecian women suffered; by other customs and laws they were still more oppressed: it was not in their power to do any judicial act without the consent of a tutor, or guardian; and so little power, even over themselves, did the legislature devolve upon women, though ripened by age and experience, that when the father died, the son became the guardian of his own mother. When a woman was cited into court, she was incapable of answering without her guardian; and therefore the words of the proclamation were, We cite A. B. and her guardian. In making a will, it was not only necessary that the guardian should give his consent, but that he should be a party. These facts shew, that the Greek women were under the most complete tutelage, whereby they were deprived of almost all political existence; and teach us to consider a guardian and his pupil as the substance and the shadow, the latter of which could not exist without the former. But this is not all; we have already mentioned some of the slavish employments to which they were put, and shall now add, that, in the heroic ages,

Other restrictions and hardships they suffered.

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the women did all the slavish and domestic offices, even such as were inconsistent with the delicacy and modesty of the sex: they conducted the men to bed, dressed and undressed them, attended them while in the baths, dried and perfumed them when they came out of them; nor were these, and such other offices, only allotted to servants or slaves, no rank was exempted from them. The princess Naussica, daughter of Alcinous, carried her own linen to the river in a chariot, and having washed and laid it on the bank, sat down by it, and dined on the provision she had brought along with her. When such was the employment of their own women of rank, we cannot expect that their captives should share a happier fate; accordingly, we find Hector lamenting, that, should Troy be taken, his wife would be condemned to the most slavish drudgery; and Hecuba bewailing, that, like a dog, she was chained at the gate of Agamemnon.

IN the state of wedlock, a state of all others the most delicate, the Lacedemonians seem to have been destitute of all the finer feelings; for, despising that principle of mutual fidelity, which in some degree appears to have been cherished by every people only a single degree removed from the rudest barbarity, they, without any reluctance, borrowed and lent wives with each other; a kind of barter totally inconsistent with that sympathetic union of souls, which always does, or ought to take place, between husband and wife: but the matter did not end here; for, by the laws of Solon, a lusty well-made young fellow might, when he pleased, demand permission to cohabit with the wife of any of his fellow-citizens, who was less handsome and robust than himself, under pretence of raising up children to the state, who should, like the father, be strong and vigorous; and such an unreasonable demand, the husband was

not

not at liberty to reject: what still further shews how little delicacy existed in their connections with their wives, is their conduct in a war with the Myſſinians; when, having bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to return to their own city till they had revenged the injury they had received, and the war having been unexpectedly protracted for the space of ten years, they began to be afraid that a longer absence would tend greatly to depopulate their state; to prevent which, they sent back a certain number of those who had joined the army, after the above-mentioned oath had been taken, with full power to cohabit with all the wives, whose husbands were absent. Nothing can more plainly discover the despicable condition of the Grecian women: the state, as a body politic, regarded them only as instruments of general propagation; and their husbands indelicately acquiesced in the idea, which they never could have done, had they been actuated by any thing but animal appetite, and had not that appetite been fixed more on the sex than the individual.

WHICHEVER way we turn us in the Grecian history, we find the most convincing proofs of the low condition of their women. Homer considers Helen, the wife of Menelaus, as of little other value than a part of the goods which were stolen along with her; and the restitution of these, and of her, are commonly mentioned in the same sentence, in such a manner, as to shew, that such restitution would have been considered as a full reparation of the injury sustained; so that Menelaus did not place the crime of Paris in having debauched his wife, but in having stolen from him to the amount of so much value. And the same author, in celebrating Penelope, the wife of Ulyſſes, for refusing in his absence so many suitors, does not appear to place the merit of her con-

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duct in a superior regard to chastity, or in love to her husband; but in preserving to his family the dowry she had brought along with her, which, on a second marriage, must have been restored to her father Icarius: and though Telemachus is always represented as a most dutiful son, we find him reproving his mother in a manner, which shews that the sex in general were not treated with softness and delicacy, however dignified, or with whatever authority invested.

Your widowed hours, apart, with female toil,
And various labours of the loom, beguile.
There rule, from palace cares remote and free,
That care to man belongs, and most to me.

From the celebration of some of their public games, women were prohibited by the severest penalty: to the festival at Eleusis, they were not to go in chariots: in some laws, they were classed with slaves; women and slaves were forbid to practise physic. It was a custom in Greece to expose such children as they thought themselves not able to maintain, or likely to derive any advantage from: daughters, according to Possidippus, being more costly in their education, and less likely to be beneficial afterward, were more frequently treated in this manner than sons.

A man, though poor, will not expose his son;
But if he's rich, will scarce preserve his daughter.

A custom which we shall have occasion to take notice of, in the course of this work, as prevailing in several nations, sunk in ignorance and barbarity. Of all the Greeks, the Thebans were the only people who had a positive law against this horrid custom.

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the Greek
women.

LET us now turn our eyes to the other side of the picture, and take a view of the privileges bestowed by law or custom on the Greek women: though we nowhere find that they were ever admitted to public authority, nor even to share, as in some countries, the rank and power of their husbands; yet, in the earlier ages, they had a vote in the public assemblies, which was afterwards taken from them. They succeeded equally with brothers to the inheritance of their fathers; and to the whole of that inheritance, if they had no brothers. But to this last privilege was always annexed a clog, which must have been extremely disagreeable to every woman of sentiment and feeling; an heiress was obliged, by the laws of Greece, to marry her nearest relation, that the estate might not go out of the family; and this relation, in case of her refusal, had a right to sue for the delivery of her person, as we do for goods and chattels: but, on the other side, as it sometimes happened that this claimant was old or impotent, it was provided by law, that if he did not, in a convenient time, impregnate his wife, she might apply to any one she pleased for that purpose.

HE who divorced his wife, was obliged either to return her dowry, or pay her so much per month by way of maintenance. He who ravished a free woman, was constrained in some states to marry her, in others to pay a hundred, and in others again, a thousand drachmas. But what reflects more honour on the Greeks than any thing we find in their behaviour toward women, is the care they took of female orphans. “ He who is the next
“ in blood (says their law) to an orphan virgin, who hath no for-
“ tune, shall marry her himself, or settle a fortune upon her, ac-
“ cording to his quality; if there be many relations, all equally
“ allied,

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“allied, all of them, according to their several qualities, shall
“contribute something towards her fortune.” After all, when we impartially consider the good and ill treatment of the Grecian women, we find that the balance was much against them, and may therefore conclude, that though the Greeks were eminent in arts, though they were illustrious in arms, in politeness, and elegance of manners, the highest pitch to which they ever arrived, was only a few degrees above savage barbarity.

Of the Ro-
man women.

IN the more early periods of the Roman republic, as in the infancy of almost all the ancient nations, we find every thing involved in fable and absurdity; immortality and mortality hardly distinguishable from each other; heroes, demigods, and goddesses, performing almost every action, and residing in every grove. Such ridiculous notions, wherever we meet with them, afford the most infallible proofs of ignorance and barbarity, and constantly vanish in proportion to the increase of reasoning and knowledge.

AGREEABLY to this observation, the earliest accounts of the Romans exhibit a rude and uncultivated people, but little acquainted with decency, and entire strangers to that delicacy which takes place between the two sexes in nations tolerably advanced in civilization and society. Their first appearance, as an independent state, was as an handful of robbers, or banditti; and one of the first of their memorable actions, was the capture of some young women, to enable them to raise up members to the state they had erected: to these women, however, they behaved in a manner that we have seldom an opportunity of observing among a people so little cultivated. They treated them with so much kindness, and had the address so to please them, that they abso-
lutely

lutely refused to be rescued from their ravishers; but as many of our female readers may not be acquainted with this history, we shall give them a short sketch of it.

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WHEN Romulus, the founder of Rome, had formed his infant republic, finding that he had no women, and that none of the neighbouring nations would give their daughters in marriage to men whom they considered as a set of lawless banditti; he was obliged by stratagem to procure for his citizens, what he could not obtain for them by intreaty. Accordingly, having proclaimed a solemn feast, and an exhibition of games in honour of Equestrian Neptune, and by that means gathered a great number of people together; on a signal given, the Romans, with drawn swords in their hands, rushed among the strangers, and forcibly carried away a great number of their daughters to Rome. The next day Romulus himself distributed them as wives to those of his citizens, who had thus by violence carried them away*. From so rude a beginning, and among a people so severe and inflexible as the Romans, it is not unnatural for the reader to expect to find, that women were treated in the same indignant, if not in a worse manner, than they were among the nations we have already mentioned. In this, however, he will be mistaken; it was the Romans who first gave to the sex public liberty, who first properly cultivated their minds, and thought it as necessary as to adorn their bodies: among them were they first fitted for society, and for becoming rational companions; and among them, was it first demonstrated to the world, that they were capable of great actions, and deserved a better fate than to be shut up in seraglios, and kept

Rape of the
Sabine Vir-
gins.

* This is what we frequently find mentioned in history, by the name of the Rape of the Sabine Virgins.

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only as the pageants of grandeur, or instruments of satisfying illicit love; truths which the sequel of the history of the Sabine women will amply confirm.

THE violent capture of these young women by the Romans, was highly resented by all the neighbouring nations, and especially by the Sabines, to whom the greatest part of them belonged; they sent to demand restitution of their daughters, promising, at the same time, an alliance, and liberty of intermarrying with the Romans, should the demand be complied with. But Romulus not thinking it expedient to part with the only possible means he had of raising future citizens, instead of granting what they asked, demanded of the Sabines, that they should confirm the marriages of their daughters with the Romans. These conferences, at last, produced a treaty of peace; and that, like many others of the same nature, ended in a more inveterate war. The Romans having in this gained some advantages, the Sabines retired; and having breathed a while, sent a second embassy to demand their daughters, were again refused, and again commenced hostilities. Being this time more successful, they besieged Romulus in his citadel of Rome, and threatened immediate destruction to him and all his people, unless their daughters were restored. In this alarming situation, Hersilia, wife of Romulus, demanded an audience of the senate, and laid before them a design, which the women had formed among themselves, without the knowledge of their husbands, which was, to act the part of mediators between the contending parties. The proposal being approved, a decree was immediately passed, permitting the women to go on the proposed negociation; and only requiring, that each of them should leave one of her children as a security that she would return; the rest, they

they were all allowed to carry with them, as objects which might more effectually move the compassion of their fathers and relations. Thus authorized, the women laid aside their ornaments, put on mourning, and carrying their children in their arms, advanced to the camp of the Sabines, and threw themselves at the feet of their fathers. The Sabine king, having assembled his chief officers, ordered the women to declare for what purpose they were come; which Hersilia did in so pathetic a manner, that she brought on a conference between the chiefs of the two nations, and this conference, by her mediation, and that of the other women, soon ended in an amicable alliance.

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As a reward for this most important service of the Sabine women, several privileges and honourable marks of distinction were granted them by the senate; all immodest and licentious discourses were forbid in their presence, and no indecent objects were to be brought before them; every one was ordered to give way to them in the street. In capital cases, they were exempted from the jurisdiction of the ordinary judges. And lastly, their children were allowed to wear a golden ball hanging at their breast, and to be clothed with a particular robe, called *Pretexta*. But all these honours and privileges not being thought sufficient, some time after a festival was instituted, and called *Matronalia*, in honour of the Sabine matrons. During this festival, the Roman matrons served their slaves at table, and received presents from their husbands; sacrifices were then also offered to Juno Lucina, to induce her to assist them in child-bearing.

Privileges of
the Roman
women.

FROM a service so signal, conferred by women on an infant republic, and from the peculiar notice taken of that service, we would

Laws and
customs re-
straining their
liberty.

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would naturally conclude that the Romans were then a cultivated people, and that their women were treated with all that softness and indulgence due to the tenderness of their sex. Such a conclusion, however, would be erroneous, for the Romans were at this period strangers to every softness and refinement of manners, and the honours bestowed on the Sabine women were only sudden and indigested effusions of gratitude, which did not operate uniformly on the whole of their conduct towards a sex that nature and obligation ought to have rendered dear to them.

THE Roman women, as well as the Greeks, were under perpetual guardianship, and at no age, nor in any condition, were ever trusted with the management of their own fortunes; they were in case of wills, and perhaps in other cases, not admitted as evidence; every father had a power of life and death over his daughters; but this power was not restricted to females only, it extended to sons as well as daughters. Sumptuary laws, generally more grievous to women than to men, as they restrain their most darling passions, were long in force at Rome: the Oppian law prohibited them from having more than half an ounce of gold employed in ornamenting their persons, from wearing cloaths of divers colours, and from riding in chariots either in the city or a thousand paces around it. They were strictly forbid the use of wine, or even to have in their possession the key of any place where it was kept, for either of which faults they were liable to be divorced by their husbands; and so careful were the Romans in restraining their women from wine, that they are supposed to have first introduced the custom of saluting their female relations and acquaintance, on entering into the house of a friend or a neighbour,

a neighbour, that they might discover by their breath whether they had tasted any of that liquor. This strictness, however, began in time to be relaxed, till at last luxury and debauchery becoming too strong for every law, the women indulged themselves in equal liberties with the men. But such was not the case in the earlier ages of Rome, Romulus even permitted husbands to kill their wives if they found them drinking wine; and if we may believe Valerius [Maximus, Egnatius Metellus, having detected his wife drinking wine out of a cask, actually made use of this permission, and was by Romulus acquitted. And Fabius Pictor relates, that a Roman lady having picked the lock of a chest, in order to come at the key of a place where some wine was kept, her parents shut her up and starved her to death.

WOMEN were liable to be divorced by their husbands almost at pleasure, provided the portion was returned which they had brought along with them. They were also liable to be divorced for barrenness, which, if it could be construed into a fault, was at least the fault of nature, and might sometimes be that of the husband. Such were the disadvantages attending the Roman women, but they were not all that they laboured under; a few sumptuary laws, a subordination to the men, and a total want of authority, do not so remarkably affect the sex, as to be coldly and indelicately treated by their husbands and lovers. Such a treatment is touching them in the tenderest part; but such, however, we have reason to believe, they often met with from the Romans, who had not yet learned, as in modern times, to blend the severities of the patriot, and roughness of the warrior, with that soft and indulging behaviour, so conspicuous in our modern patriots and heroes. But husbands not only themselves behaved roughly

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to their wives, they even sometimes permitted their servants and slaves to do the same; the principal Eunuch of Justinian the Second, threatened to chastise the Empress, his master's wife, in the manner that children are chastised at school, if she did not obey his orders.

BUT to dwell no longer on the grievances of the Roman women. We have already mentioned some of their honours and privileges; and the following, which we shall add, will shew, that, upon the whole, their condition was much preferable to that of the women of any other people we have hitherto mentioned.

Honours conferred on the Roman women.

IN endeavouring to point out some of the particular honours conferred on the Roman ladies, in periods posterior to these we have already run over, we shall not introduce the story of Lucretia, whose tragical exit was productive of so much blood and devastation; nor of Virginia, whose end, if possible, still more tragical, almost overturned the empire of Rome. These effects were, perhaps, more the result of an honest indignation against ravishers and murderers, than proofs of general regard paid to the sex. Beauty in every country has had a power of commanding love, and private friendships between individuals of the different sexes have every where been productive of regard; but when public honours and privileges are granted to the sex by a legislative body, not under the influence of beauty nor the controul of passion, as was the case with the senate of Rome, they are the strongest proofs which can possibly be adduced of female merit.

THE public honours conferred on the Sabine women we have already mentioned; but the Romans did not confine honorary

rewards to them only, but indiscriminately bestowed them on the sex whenever merited. They hung up the distaff of Tanquil, the consort of Tarquin, in the temple of Hercules; not only as a public reward for the proper use she had made of it, but also to encourage others to follow so laudable an example. When Coriolanus, in revenge for some affront offered him at Rome; was ready at the head of a victorious army of the Volsci to lay that city in ashes; when the tears and prayers of his friends, of the nobility, and even of the venerable senate, were insufficient to divert the storm; Veturia his mother, by the persuasion of the Roman matrons, having prevailed on him to lay aside his resentment; the senate desired that the women engaged in this affair should ask any favour they thought proper; when, unambitious of rewards; they only begged that they might be allowed to build, at their own expence, a temple to the fortune of women. The senate, surpris'd at so much disinterestedness, ordered the temple to be immediately built on the very spot where Coriolanus had been prevailed upon to sacrifice his resentment to the love of his country; which being completed, Veturia was consecrated priestess. A Dictator of Rome having vowed to dedicate a golden vase of a certain weight to Apollo, and the senate not being able to procure a sufficient quantity of gold to make it, the ladies voluntarily parted with many of their trinkets for that purpose. The senate, struck with the unsolicited generosity, decreed that funeral orations should thenceforth be made for the women as well as for the men, and that they should be allowed to ride in chariots at the public games.

THE sacred function of ministering at the altars of the gods has, in most countries, been wholly reserved for the men; but
this.

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this was not the case at Rome, they had priestesses as well as priests, who officiated in several of their temples. Besides these, they had a peculiar order of priestesses, called Vestals, who resided in the temple of Vesta, and whose office was to keep the pædium *, which was considered as the security of the empire, and to preserve the sacred fire of the goddess in perpetual vigour. The prerogatives of this order demonstrate not only the confidence which the Romans had in their women, but also the regard they paid to their religion. When the principal magistrates, even though consuls, met a vestal, they gave way to her; any insult offered to a vestal was punished with death; if any of the order happened to meet a criminal carrying to execution, he was immediately released, provided the vestal affirmed the meeting was accidental. They were the only women whose evidence was received in courts of justice; they were the umpires of the differences which happened between persons of the first rank; they were allowed the liberty of being interred in the city, a liberty seldom granted even to their greatest heroes; and in their hands, as in an inviolable asylum, were deposited the wills and testaments of such as were afraid that frauds and forgeries might be committed by their relations. When the deification of emperors and of heroes became fashionable at Rome, the women soon also insinuated themselves into this species of honour; their statues were set up in the temples, and public sacrifices were offered to, and incense burnt before them. The highest honour that could be conferred on a Roman hero, who had been slain in the defence of his country, was to be buried in the field of Mars; an honour

* The statue of Pallas, which the Romans believed would secure their city from being taken so long as it remained there.

which,

which, in length of time, came also to be shared by illustrious women. Among the Romans, women generally ate and drank with the men, and in later times were even admitted to their convivial meetings; liberties, which in so full an extent we have not hitherto found them enjoying; they also shared the honours and even titles of their husbands, and at one period honours of a nature not usually bestowed on the sex were instituted for them only*.

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BUT amid all these honours, and all these public testimonies of approbation, we have reason to believe that the Romans sacrificed more to merit than to love; and that while their women shared with them almost every honour and every privilege, they were in general treated at home rather with the cool esteem of friendship, than with the warm indulgence of tenderness and affection. If the whole tenor of their conduct gives us reason to think that such was their behaviour to their own women, we have but too many undoubted proofs to assure us, that their captives of the fair sex were often treated even with the most horrid barbarity; their political virtue was so rigid and severe, that it never suffered humanity in the least to interfere where the interest of their country was concerned. Hence, in order to aggrandize the Roman name, and strike terror into conquered nations, they often dragged beauty and grandeur at the wheels of their triumphal chariots, and exposed queens and princesses, without regard of rank or of sex, to degradations, and to tortures that even a savage would blush for. Not contented with ravishing, they also

Romans cruel
to the women
of conquered
nations.

* Heliogabalus gave his mother a seat and vote in the senate of Rome, and some time after instituted a female senate, and placed her at the head of it. The business of this senate was to regulate the important affairs of dress and fashion; but this institution did not long survive its despicable founder: soon after his death it was dissolved; nor did any succeeding emperor ever afterward attempt to re-establish it.

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scourged the daughters of the British queen Boadicea. After they had overcome the army of the Ambrones, their women being in a fortified camp, for some time defended themselves; but finding they could not be able to hold out, desired to capitulate, and required no other condition than that their chastity should not be violated; but even this single condition was not granted by the cruel and libidinous Romans. But we will not proceed to blacken the historic page with a list of such enormous crimes.

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The same Subject continued.

THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and other northern nations, upon whom Tacitus and his contemporary writers so liberally bestow the epithet of Barbarians, were, in several respects, less so than the Romans, who, at that time, thought themselves the only polished people upon the globe; the greater part of these nations treated their women, if not with a politeness, at least with a regard superior to that of those very Romans who gave them so horrid an appellation.

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IN Germany, when the regal dignity descended to a woman, they allowed her to enjoy it, and women often governed with a steadiness and sagacity which did honour to the sex, and excited the admiration of the neighbouring nations; the greatest heroes neither disdained to fight under their banners, nor be regulated by their councils, as they imagined them to be endowed with a kind of oracular wisdom, and a prudence more than human. In their treaties with one another, female hostages were given by the ancient Germans; and by these they reckoned themselves more firmly engaged than by an equal, or even a superior number of the other sex. In their warlike excursions, they carried their women along with them, and sometimes even to the field of battle, where their cries and shouts served to intimidate their enemies, and to animate their friends with martial ardour; and even sometimes to inflame and

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support them, when ready to yield to superior numbers, or more steady discipline. The approbation of the fair they esteemed as the most honourable reward of their bravery, and for them, as being what they valued most, they fought with the most determined resolution. When they had turned their backs on the enemy, their wives often painted so pathetically the horrors of captivity, that they were prevailed upon, with double fury, to return to the charge, rather than submit themselves to such indignity. A civil war having once arisen among the Gauls, to decide the quarrel, two armies were drawn out into the field, extended front to front, and just ready to commence a dreadful carnage, when the women with dishevelled hair rushing in between them, put a stop to the work of destruction, and had the address to reconcile them to each other. From that time forward, the Gauls admitted the women to their councils, when peace or war was to be debated; and from that time also, such differences as arose between them and their allies were terminated by female negotiation; and, agreeably to this custom, we find it stipulated in their treaty with Hannibal, that should the Gauls have any complaint against the Carthaginians, the matter should be settled by the Carthaginian general; but should the Carthaginians have any complaint against the Gauls, it should be referred to the Gaulish women. The Goths obliged him who debauched a virgin to marry her, if she was equal to him in rank; if not, he was constrained to give her a fortune equal to his own condition; if he could not give her such a fortune, he was condemned to death; because a woman thus dishonoured, had no chance of obtaining a husband without a fortune; and because it was by marriage only that a state could be properly peopled.

To

To these proofs of the regard, and even of the veneration, which the ancient inhabitants of the North paid to their women, we shall add, that they considered them as having something sacred in their character, as endowed with a foresight of future events, as interpreters of the Divine will in this world, and as a part of the reward of the blessed in the next. "The Cimbri," says Strabo, "when they took the field, were accompanied by venerable hoary-headed prophetesses, clothed in long white linen robes." "A crowd of beautiful virgins," says the Edda *, "wait on the heroes in the hall of Odin, and fill their cups as fast as they empty them." It is worth remarking in this place, that many of the ancient eastern religions, and Mahometism, which was copied from them, taught, that a great part of the joys of Paradise consisted in beautiful women. But then they were to enjoy them as such; whereas the Northerners were satisfied with having their cups quickly replenished by them: a circumstance, which plainly shews, that the predominant passion of the East was love; that of the North, drinking.

THE ancient Britons appear not to have been behind any of the other northern nations in the veneration and regard paid to their women; they had tamely submitted to every reiterated evil, and to every species of oppression which the cruel and avaricious Romans had laid upon them; but when these lawless destroyers scourged their queen, and ravished her daughters, their resentment was kindled, they arose to revenge the cause of the sex; and had their discipline been equal to their valour, they would at that time have put an end to the Roman insults, and extirpated them from the British isles.

Ancient British women
how treated.

* The Edda is the sacred book of the ancient Scandinavians and other northern nations.

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Those of the
other northern
nations.

THOUGH it appears from what has been related, that the ancient inhabitants of the North valued and esteemed their women, yet their conduct towards them was far from being all of a piece; while they revered them as beings inspired with a ray of the Divinity, according to the custom of Asia, from whence they originally came, they at the same time treated them as servants, or rather as slaves. The wives and children were not allowed to eat with the husbands, but waited upon them at their meals, and afterward ate up what they had left. Among the ancient Danes, and several of their northern neighbours, convivial feasting was more frequent than perhaps among any other people; almost every occurrence and business was productive of a feast, where eating and drinking was carried to the most abominable excess. But to such feasts, we have reason to believe, the women were only admitted as servants; and that they stood behind their husbands and friends, supplying them with meat and drink, and took care of them at last when their drunkenness had rendered them incapable of doing any thing for themselves. The German women, like those of the Greeks and Romans, were under perpetual guardianship; but it was generally to the care of some person of prudence and experience they were committed, and not to their own sons, as in Greece. When any person was murdered, the laws of their states took no notice of it; the ideas of civil society were not then so much perfected, as to consider every individual as, in some degree, the property of the community; the relations of the party murdered were only supposed to have sustained a loss, and, therefore, to the relations only it belonged to revenge the death, or to agree with the murderer for a sum of money by way of compensation. Neither of these privileges were, however, vested in the women; they were not allowed to take vengeance, because, perhaps, cruelty
and

and bloodshed did not suit with the softness of their nature; they were not to take the compensation, because they were considered as too weak and feeble to extort it.

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IN general, the women of the North seem not to have been indulged with much property. The Visigoths were bound by a law not to give more to a wife than the tenth part of their substance. The German women anciently succeeded not to any inheritance, though afterwards they were permitted to succeed after the males of the same degree of kindred. But the most subordinate of all female conditions seems among them to have been that of a wife to her husband. The husband of an adulteress was allowed to assemble her relations, in their presence to cut off her hair, strip her naked, turn her out of his house, and whip her from one end of the village to the other. A woman thus publicly exposed could never wipe away the stain of so foul an infamy; the most circumspect behaviour could never call back her lost character, nor could any motive ever prevail on another to marry her, though youth, beauty, fortune, and every advantage, combined to allure him.

WE have already mentioned, that a law among the Goths obliged a man to marry or give a portion to the woman he had debauched. Among the Angles, and many other of the northern nations, wounds and injuries were fixed by law at a certain price; and a wound given to a virgin was estimated at double the value which was set upon it when given to a man of the same rank. If this law originated from a sense of the weakness and inability of the sex to defend themselves, it demonstrated a legislature not inattentive to their interest: if from humanity, or from love, it

shewed

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shewed in the men a degree of civilization, which the histories of these ages in many circumstances seem to contradict.

THE mythology of all antiquity is full of female as well as of male deities. The Hebrews, and many of their neighbouring nations, worshipped the Queen of Heaven; the Phœnicians adored Astarte; the Scythians, Apia; and the Scandinavians, Frigga, the consort of Odin. Wherever female deities have obtained a place in the religion of a people, it is a sign that women are of some consequence; for we find in those modern nations where women are held in the most despicable light, that even their deities are all of the masculine gender. As there were in the North female deities, so they had priestesses who ministered in their groves, and at their altars. The Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and many other of the ancients, offered to their gods human victims; sometimes of the male, and sometimes of the female gender: the Northerns followed their example, only with this difference, that we have reason to believe they never sacrificed any females. Whether they were not thought victims of sufficient importance to be offered to their gods; whether they spared them from lenity and indulgence; or from the consideration of the loss that population would sustain by their death, is uncertain. But when we take a view of the whole of their conduct towards the sex, we are much inclined to attribute it to indulgence and affection.

As the inhabitants of the North were not distinguished by a quickness of sensibility, as they devoted most of their time to a passion for arms, and to the pleasures of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them; and yet they

esteemed and regarded their women, forming, in this particular, a striking contrast to the Asiatics and other southern people, who have ever been distinguished by the warmest love, entirely divested of the smallest degree of regard or esteem. An Asiatic, while he approaches his mistress as if she were a divinity, treats her as a criminal, and considering her as entirely made for his pleasures; he is at the same time her tyrant and her slave: while the Northerners did not seem to have looked on the sex as destined for their pleasures, so much as for their convenience and assistance: they did not view them as the slaves of their power, and the panders of their lust, but as their friends and companions; nor did they approach them with the fawning submission of inferiors, and at the same time treat them with the haughty disrespect of superiors.

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IN tracing the history of the treatment and condition of women downwards from the periods already reviewed, our chief business will be among the descendants of those northern nations, of whom we have been now speaking; who at length dissatisfied with the cold and barren regions they inhabited, where, on a scanty and hard-earned pittance, they dragged out a miserable existence; and convinced, as every uncultivated people were, that the sword gave a right to whatever they could conquer by it; set out in swarms towards the south, and in process of time over-ran all Europe, propagated their race, and diffused their manners and customs as far as they extended their arms.

Treatment of
women in the
middle age.

WE have already seen, that they carried their wives and children with them into the field; which being a scene not only adapted to the growth of riot and debauchery, but where these vices may

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more easily elude the vigilance of justice ; many of the strictest laws became necessary for their preservation, and several of this nature were enacted by the Franks. When in the field, their operations were from time to time settled in a council, of which their wives made a part ; and when in danger of being defeated, they were more afraid of their reproaches than of the swords of their enemies. The men, constantly employed in war or in drinking, had neither time nor inclination to acquire useful knowledge. The women, more at leisure, from the little they became acquainted with, were by the men considered as oracles : they were supposed to be able to interpret dreams, and had actually learned the virtues of a few simples. Hence both virgins and matrons were employed in dressing the wounds of their lovers and husbands. With all these acquisitions, at that time so extraordinary as well as useful ; with all that majestic beauty, for which they were so famous in the songs of their bards ; is it any wonder, that the daughters of the North were the first who inspired the men with sentimental feeling, and with ideas little short of adoration ? But such is the nature of man, especially when he is but a few degrees removed from barbarity, that while he adores a woman for her beauty, he scruples not to attack and ruin her virtue. Such was not the complexion of the times we have already delineated ; but it became the complexion of these we are now considering. An universal spirit of piracy and emigration had crept into the North : one half of its inhabitants were constantly wandering in quest of new adventures, and of new settlements. Wanderers, who have neither property nor possessions to serve as hostages for their good behaviour, are generally licentious in their manners : hence it became necessary for those who had acquired settlements, not only to secure their property, but also their wives and children, from

from these lawless wanderers, in castles, and in strong fortifications.

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IN this manner women became first subject to a species of confinement in the North, not because they were, as is alleged in the South, wicked and libidinous, but because they were beautiful, weak and defenceless. This confinement, however, not being the effect of jealousy, as in Asia, but of prudence, and desire of securing their women from the insults of licentious banditti; when a woman found a lover, or a husband, to protect her from the rudeness and barbarity of the times, she could then venture abroad with impunity in his company. Hence every woman naturally wished to engage such a champion; and every man of spirit, fond of the honour arising from it, as naturally enlisted himself in the service. And in this manner arose the institution of chivalry; an institution, which, though it owed its birth to chance and the necessity of the times, made so rapid a progress, that in a little while it was sufficient for a fair lady to have it publicly known, that such a gallant warrior was her declared champion, and would revenge every wrong done to her, whether in his presence or absence: this enlarged still the circle of her liberty, and more restrained the hand of insult and violence.

BESIDES the title a young warrior had to the approbation and favour of her whom he thus defended, there was another, and, if possible, a still more prevailing motive, the love of glory; in these times, the most anxiously coveted, and most intimately connected with such generous and disinterested actions as defending the weak and rescuing the oppressed. All these considerations prompted the youthful warrior to take upon him an office, which,

Causes which
prompted the
men so strongly
to protect
the women.

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while it flattered his love, at the same time, by its acquisition of fame, no less fed and nourished his vanity : and as the man acquired honour, and the name of valour, by undertaking to defend an innocent and helpless woman ; so the woman acquired an additional lustre, and the name of beauty, by being thus distinguished by a gallant champion. Thus the honour and interest of the two sexes became mutually blended together, and they reflected additional lustre and reputation upon each other ; a truth to which all the historical records of these times bear the most ample testimony.

It is not a little remarkable, that in the same periods in which women were gradually rising into consequence in one part of Europe, they should be losing it altogether in another. While the spirit of chivalry made them objects almost of adoration in the North, Mahomet had established a religion in Asia, which divested them almost of every privilege, and of all political consequence : this religion, brought over into Europe, and established in the West by the conquering arms of his successors, not only sunk the power of beauty almost to nothing, but condemned the whole of the sex to perpetual subordination and imprisonment.

THIS is a striking proof, that the actions of men are regulated by no fixed principle : but, in the ages we are considering, another not less striking is, that human nature endeavoured to assume the most contradictory appearances ; it endeavoured to blend the meek and forgiving spirit of the religion of Jesus, with the fierce and intolerant spirit of war and bloodshed. It endeavoured to mix the soft sentiments of love, with the revengeful dictates of affronted honour ; and the same tender sentiment which bound a lover to his mistress,

infl-

instigated him, in the most savage manner, to cut the throats of all those who openly professed either to love or hate her. In short, nothing had at this time acquired any consistency : religion was a mixture of paganism and superstition, and law was a compound of weakness and injustice. While the pilgrim travelled to Jerusalem to obtain forgiveness of his sins, he was adding daily to the load, by pillaging and debauchery on the way. Religion, thus reduced to penance and ceremony, was too weak to combat the passions ; and law, if ridiculous in its modes of investigation, was still more conspicuous for being feeble in its power of execution. In such a crisis, something distinct from both became necessary. The men had already begun to glory in being the protectors of such women, as they were attached to by love and friendship : it was but carrying the idea one step farther, from being the champion of a single woman, to become the champion of the whole sex, and thereby establish a more complete system of chivalry ; a thing which actually happened, after the spirit of crusading had been entirely obliterated by a repetition of unsuccessful attempts.

SUCH is the imperfection of our nature, that to chance and necessity we owe the far greater part of our useful discoveries, as also the further improvement of such as are already but imperfectly known. This was the case with chivalry : it originated from love, honour, and the necessity of defending women in the times of lawless depredation, and had at first for its object the defence of one woman only : afterward it extended to the protection of the whole sex ; and by degrees stretching itself still wider, its object became distressed innocence, wherever it was found suffering by the hard hand of injustice and oppression.

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Arrived at this period, it was considered as the most honourable and exalted of all professions ; was eagerly courted by all ranks of mankind ; nor were any candidates, however elevated in their station, admitted into it, without the fullest credentials of valour, honour and probity, or a long train of previous discipline ; and even the admission itself was calculated to inspire a love of glory, and of benevolence ; it was performed at the altar by ceremonies no less awful than pompous, and well calculated to instil into the mind of the young hero, the most enthusiastic love of honour, disinterestedness, and truth.

Effects of chivalry.

THE effects of this institution, which at last became so ridiculously whimsical, as to be finally laughed out of the world by the inimitable Cervantes, were in the beginning highly beneficial to society : even war was divested of half its horrors, when it was carried on by men trained up in the principles of honour and humanity : weakness, which before had every thing to fear from power, and hardly any protection by law, now began to enjoy itself in security, when it found strength and fidelity engaged to defend it ; and as weakness was more peculiarly the lot of women, they were also objects of the peculiar care and attention of this institution. Hence they now began to feel a consequence to which they had hitherto been strangers ; they were politely treated by all, because it was known that their cause was the cause of chivalry. They were approached with submission by the brave ; they were the judges even of bravery itself, and entrusted with the distribution of the rewards bestowed on it at public tournaments ; where a smile of approbation on the knight to whom they delivered them, was often considered by him as a greater reward than all the glory he had acquired by his invincible arm. The men considered tournaments as

the theatres where they were to gain applause; and lovers, as those of acquiring the esteem of the fair. “ Nothing (says a French
 “ historian) was longed for by the ladies with so much impatience;
 “ and this not so much from the pleasure of beholding a magni-
 “ ficent spectacle, as from the glory of presiding there: it was
 “ by them that the prize of these shows was always distributed;
 “ they were the soul and capital ornament of them: to animate
 “ the courage of the champions, they used to give them a token,
 “ which was sometimes a scarf, a veil, a coif, a sleeve, a brace-
 “ let, a knot, a detached piece of their attire, and sometimes a
 “ curious piece of work of their own doing; and with these, the
 “ knight decorated the top of his helmet or of his spear, his
 “ shield, his coat of arms, or some other part of his armour.”

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To such a pitch of enthusiastic veneration of the fair sex did the institution of chivalry carry the ages in which it flourished, that the least contemptuous word uttered concerning any of them, disqualified a knight for the duties and privileges of his profession: and a lady having cause of complaint against a knight, used to touch the helmet or shield of his arms, as a token of applying to the judges, for a trial of his crime; when, after proper inquiry, if the delinquency was proved, the hapless culprit immediately suffered the penalty of exclusion, and could never again be restored to his dignity, but by the intercession of the fair, and the most solemn promises of better behaviour for the future. As the greatest part of the nobility and gentry were, in the times we are considering, of the order of chivalry, this institution was in that order a sufficient barrier against indecent liberties and scandalous reports. But the lower orders of men were not to be bound by the silken cords of honour: to keep them, therefore, within
 the

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the limits prescribed by decency, other motives were devised : the laws of the Thuringians ordained, that he who stole the clothes of a woman while bathing, or at any time threw dirty water upon her, should be severely fined ; and that all compositions for injuries should be doubled, when the injury was done to a woman. The laws of the Franks enacted, that he who squeezed the hand of a free woman should pay fifteen sols, twice as much if he laid hold of her arm, and four times as much if he touched her breast. These were powerful restraints on indecorum ; and though they strongly mark the character of the times, yet they shew the influence of women, or rather, perhaps, the attention of the men to preserve their delicacy, as well as chastity, from every rude invader.

ARTS, sciences, and learning had, at the subversion of the Roman empire, been almost totally eradicated ; a people brought up to obtain every thing by the sword, had no idea of gaining a subsistence by the still peaceful means of labour and œconomy. Learning, and every art thereon depending, was for several centuries despised, as mean and contemptible ; and a gentleman who had stooped to become a scholar, or to learn any thing useful in civil life, was considered as having degraded himself for ever. Among people thus circumstanced, nothing was so difficult as to make any improvement : accordingly we find, that many of the middle ages were more stationary than, perhaps, any period in the history of mankind.

Other causes
which gave
fresh import-
ance to wo-
men.

AMONG the nations who conquered the Roman empire the Christian religion had been early introduced ; but its peaceful precepts, and even all the coercive powers with which it was armed,

armed, were but feeble and unavailing, when opposed to customs sanctified by time, and to minds grown haughty and intolerant by success; and it was many ages before it could tame that wild and romantic rage for fighting, with or without cause, for which the inhabitants of the north had been so remarkably distinguished. This religion had, however, another good effect: differences of opinion arose concerning it; disputes were carried on to decide these differences; disputes necessarily gave rise to emulation, and emulation to some degree of learning. When the faculties of the human mind have been exerted on a few subjects of enquiry, these subjects begin to multiply; and still as they increase, the avidity of the mind in pursuing them increases also: hence, in some measure, we may see the reason, why, toward the beginning of the twelfth century, learning began to be cultivated with so much assiduity, though it had been totally neglected before. With the revival of learning, a new and more rational importance was added to women: their former importance had been derived from superstition, and a wild and romantic spirit of honour: their present, began to erect itself on the foundation of tenderness and sense. Whatever tends to aggrandize the mind, and to add to the stock of knowledge and sensibility, is in favour of the fair sex, and makes ours lavish fresh endearments and fresh dignities upon them. Accordingly, in tracing the history of the middle ages a little downwards, we shall find that women, by the remains of chivalry, and the introduction of real politeness, arrived at a consequence to which they never attained in any other period.

THE professors of the Christian religion, one sect only excepted*, never admitted women to the dignity of the priesthood;

* The Quakers.

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but in the times we are speaking of, they made great strides toward it. While Charlemagne swayed the sceptre in France, confession was considered as so absolutely necessary to salvation, that, in several cases, and particularly at the point of death, when no priest or man could be had, it was by the church allowed to be made to a woman. And in the sixteenth century, it was no uncommon thing for church-livings, the revenues of abbeys, and even of bishoprics, to be given away with young ladies as a marriage-portion. Thus women exercised a kind of sacerdotal function; and though they did not actually officiate at the altar, they enjoyed what many of the priests themselves would have been glad of; the emoluments of the altar, without the drudgery of its service.

WHEN any material difference happened between man and man, or when one accused another of a crime, the decision, according to ancient custom, established by law, was, to be by single combat, or by the ordeal trial; from both of which ridiculous manners of appealing to heaven, women were exempted. When a man had said any thing that reflected dishonour on a woman, or accused her of a crime, she was not obliged to fight him to prove her innocence; the combat would have been unequal; nor was she obliged to submit to the ordeal trial; it was inconsistent with the delicacy of the female character and constitution; but she might chuse a champion to fight in her cause, or expose himself to the horrid trial, in order to clear her reputation: such champions were generally selected from her lovers or friends; but if she fixed upon any other, so high was the spirit of martial glory, and so eager the thirst of defending the weak and helpless sex, that we meet with no instance of a champion ever having refused to fight.

fight for, or undergo whatever custom required in defence of the lady who had honoured him with the appointment. To this we may add another motive; he who had refused, must inevitably have been branded with the name of coward; and so despicable was the condition of a coward, in these times of general heroism, that death itself appeared the most preferable choice; nay, such was the rage of fighting for women, that it became customary for those, who could not be honoured with the decision of their real quarrels, to create fictitious ones concerning them, in order to create also a necessity of fighting. Thus when, from its primitive laudable intention, of succouring the distressed, chivalry had degenerated to a kind of finical fighting madness, it was no uncommon thing for a knight to post himself in some public place, and there, by his doughty weapons, and formidable appearance, force every passenger, either to acknowledge the superior charms of his Dulcinea, or fight him on the spot. The latter of which seldom happened, unless, perchance, he met with some person as mad as himself.

HOWEVER much this may have the air and appearance of romantic fiction, it is, nevertheless, verified by a number of historical facts. Nor was fighting for the ladies confined to single instances, crouds of gallants entered the lists against each other; and even kings called out their subjects, at the commands of their mistresses, to shew their love to them, by cutting the throats of their neighbours, who had not in the least offended them. In the fourteenth century, when the countess of Blois, and the widow of Montfort, were at war against each other, a conference had been agreed on, upon pretence of settling a peace, but in reality to appoint a combat, for deciding which of the two ladies was the

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most handsome: instead of negotiating, they soon challenged each other; and Beaumanoir, who was at the head of the Britons, publicly declared, that they fought from no other motive than to see by the victory, who had the fairest mistress. In the fifteenth century, we find an anecdote of this kind still more extraordinary. John duke de Bourbonnois published a declaration, that he would go over to England, with sixteen knights, and there fight it out, in order to avoid idleness, and merit the good graces of his mistress: and, to crown all, James IV. of Scotland having, in all tournaments, professed himself knight to queen Anne of France, she summoned him to prove himself her true and valorous champion, by taking the field in her defence, against his brother-in-law, Henry VIII. of England. He obeyed the romantic mandate; and the two nations bled to feed the vanity of a woman. Warriors, when ready to engage, even invoked the aid of their mistresses, as poets do that of the Muses. If they fought valiantly, it reflected honour on the Dulcineas they adored; but if dastardly, they turned their backs on their enemies; the poor ladies were dishonoured for ever. However different in their natures are love and fighting, the former was then the most prevailing motive to the latter. The famous Gaston de Foix, who commanded the French troops at the battle of Ravenna, took advantage of this foible of his army; he rode from rank to rank, calling by name his officers, and even some of his private men, recommending to them their country, and their honour; and, above all, to shew what they could do for the love of their mistresses. The same spirit which led the men to so extravagant an adoration of the women, when in happiness and prosperity, dictated to them, that even their punishments, when absolutely necessary, should not offend against decency. In the ninth century, women, by the laws of Ken-

neth,

neth, king of Scots, were punished by drowning, or burying alive.

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FROM what has been now related, many of our fair readers may, perhaps, imagine, that in the times we have been delineating, women were more completely happy, than in any other period of the world; but this was not in reality the case; custom, which governs all things with the most absolute sway, had, through a long succession of years, given her sanction to such combats as were undertaken, either to defend the innocence, or display the beauty of women. Custom, therefore, either obliged a man to fight for a woman who desired him, or marked the refusal with eternal infamy; but custom did not oblige him in every other part of his deportment, to behave to this woman, or to the sex in general, with that respect and politeness, which have happily distinguished the character of more modern times. The same man, who, in the middle ages, would at the command, or for the defence of a woman, have encountered giants, or gigantic difficulties, had but little idea of adding to her happiness, by supplying her with the comforts and elegancies of life; and would have thought himself affronted, had she asked him to stoop and ease her of a part of that domestic slavery, which almost in every country falls to the lot of women. But, besides, men had in those ages nothing but that kind of romantic gallantry to recommend them; ignorant of letters, of arts, sciences, and of every thing that refines human-nature, they were in every thing, where gallantry was not concerned, rough and unpolished in their manners and behaviour: their time was spent in drinking, war, gallantry, and idleness; and in their hours of relaxation, they were but little in company with their women; and when they were,

the

Reverse of
this picture.

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the indelicacies of the carousal, or the cruelties of the field, were almost the only subjects they had to talk of. Hence they could not be proper companions for a sex, who, shrinking with reluctance from indelicacy and barbarity, generally turn their thoughts to softer subjects.

IN the sixth century, while the persons and characters of women were defended with a romantic enthusiasm, incredible in our days, they were, at the same time, considered as beings contaminated with a certain degree of pollution; which, at particular periods, was so great, that it rendered every thing unclean which they approached; hindered the operation of medicines, the effects of churning and brewing, and even stopped the growth of vegetables. The surest road to paradise was to abstain from women; they were not suffered to approach the altar, nor to touch the pall which covered it, unless when, by the priests, it was delivered to them to be washed. The eucharist was too holy to be touched by their naked hands; they were, therefore, ordered by the canons of the church, to have a white linen glove upon the hand into which they received it.

FROM the subversion of the Roman empire, to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, women spent most of their time alone; almost entire strangers to the joys of social life; they seldom went abroad, but to be spectators of such public diversions and amusements as the fashion of the times countenanced. Francis the First was the first who introduced women on public days to court; before his time, nothing was to be seen at any of the courts of Europe, but long-bearded politicians, plotting the destruction of the rights and liberties of mankind; and warriors clad in

in complete armour, ready to put their plots in execution. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, elegance had scarcely any existence, and even cleanliness was hardly considered as laudable. The use of linen was not known; and the most delicate of the fair sex wore woollen shifts. In Paris, they had meat only three times a week; and one hundred livres (about five pounds) was a large portion for a young lady. The better sort of citizens used splinters of wood, and rags dipped in oil, instead of candles; which, in those days, were a rarity hardly to be met with. Wine was only to be had at the shops of the apothecaries, where it was sold as a cordial; and to ride in a two-wheeled cart, along the dirty rugged streets, was reckoned a grandeur of so enviable a nature, that Philip the Fair, prohibited the wives of citizens from enjoying it. In the time of Henry VIII. of England, the peers of the realm carried their wives behind them on horseback, when they went to London; and, in the same manner, took them back to their country-seats, with hoods of waxed linen over their heads, and wrapped in mantles of cloth to secure them from the cold. Many of those things, we now suppose, must have been hard and disagreeable to the delicacy of female nature. Custom, however, must have reconciled them to what would appear to us almost intolerable. But there was one misfortune, even beyond the power of custom to alleviate; they were in perpetual danger of being accused of witchcraft, and suffering all the cruelties and indignities of a mob, instigated by superstition and enthusiasm; or being condemned by laws, which were at once a disgrace to humanity and to sense; even the bloom of youth and beauty, could not save from torture, and from death; but when age and wrinkles attacked a woman, if any thing uncommon happened in her neighbourhood,

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bourhood, she was almost sure of atoning with her life, for a crime which she never committed.

WHEN we take a retrospective view of these sketches, when we compare the times in which women were only treated with romantic gallantry, and strangers almost to every enjoyment which did not flow from that source; with these, in which they share our friendship, and partake of almost all our joys, we cannot hesitate a moment to declare, that the present condition of the fair sex, every thing impartially considered, is greatly preferable to what it was while they were approached as demigoddesses, and in the scale of political society treated as cyphers.

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The same Subject continued.

IN the last chapter, we traced the condition of women down almost to our own times, and shall now resume the subject, by endeavouring to give some account of the present rank and consequence of the sex. But as it would be a task much too tedious, and subject us to many useless repetitions, to consider this subject in every particular state and kingdom of the world, we shall divide it into three distinct heads. In the first, we shall treat of the most savage and uncultivated states of human life. In the next, of those holding a middle degree between barbarity and cultivation. And in the last, of those where civil society is arrived to the greatest perfection.

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MAN, in that rude and uncultivated state in which he originally appears in all countries, before he has been formed by society, and instructed by experience, is an animal, differing but little from the wild beasts that surround him; like them, so great a part of his time is employed in procuring food, that he has but little left for any other purpose; and like them too, his ideas seldom extend farther than to a few sensual gratifications, in which he indulges without reason, and without œconomy: thoughtless of the wants and hardships of to-morrow, and, consequently, but ill provided against them. Among his few sensual gratifications,

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we may reckon the pleasure arising from his commerce with the other sex : if, in savage life, we can call such commerce a pleasure, where, entire strangers to every reciprocal affection, and intellectual feeling arising therefrom, men are totally indifferent what sentiments their female partners entertain of them, provided they submit tamely to satisfying their appetites ; and where women regard the men as lords and masters, whom, in all things, they are obliged implicitly to obey.

Of women
in savage life.

As women are, by nature, weaker than men, their rank and condition must every where be invariably regulated, by the esteem and regard of that sex. The esteem and regard of the men must be founded on their own susceptibility of nature ; and that susceptibility must be called forth into action, by the mental qualifications and personal beauties of the women. In savage life, unless when urged by revenge, or delighted with the chase, men are dull, phlegmatic, and almost destitute of susceptibility : women have hardly any mental qualifications ; nursed in dirt and slovenliness, with but little ornament, and still less art in disposing of it ; burnt with the sun, and bedaubed with grease, they are objects rather of disgust than desire ; hence they are not the objects of love, but of animal appetite only ; are seldom admitted to any distinguishing rank, and as seldom exempted from any distinguishing slavery.

As in savage states, where hunting, fishing, and war are the only employments, vigorous exertions of strength and courage are necessary : were women sufficiently endowed with these, they might supply every deficiency, and greatly enhance their value in the eyes of the men. By these, however, they can conciliate no
affection,

affection, nor arise to any consequence; they are qualities denied them by nature, and they cannot reap the fruit of what she has not planted. In civilized countries, women have a thousand arts to supply this deficiency of strength and courage, and maintain a balance of power against the men; arts which, with a tolerable assistance from nature, they have brought to such perfection, that they can often engage the heart in their favour, while the head is against them: but in savage life, cast as it were in the lap of naked nature, exposed to every hardship, with every bleak wind of heaven blowing on their head, their forms are but little engaging; with nothing that can be called culture, their latent qualities, if they have any, are like the diamond while inclosed in the rough flint, incapable of shewing any lustre: thus destitute of every thing by which they can excite love, or acquire esteem; destitute of beauty to charm, or art to soothe, the tyrant man; they are by him destined to perform every mean and servile office, a fate which constantly attends the weak, where power and not reason dictates the law. In this the American and other savage women differ widely from those of Asia, who, if they are destitute of the qualifications necessary to gain esteem, have beauty, ornament, and the art of exciting love.

AMONG the brute animals all are equal, and superior strength only can acquire superior power: thus the bull or the stag who has beaten the whole herd, in consequence becomes their leader. Exactly the same thing takes place among savages; he who has given the most signal proofs of his courage and strength, assumes the right of being chief of the warriors of his own tribe or nation; a situation in which he is often not distinguished by personal ornaments, or by that pageantry and shew, in Europe

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and Asia reckoned so necessary an appendage of authority, but by the authority itself. But this right, however firmly he was established in it, does not descend to any of his family: if his son aspires at it, he must acquire it in the same manner as his father. Their women, as we have hinted above, being by nature disqualified from arriving at superior eminence in war, are, consequently, for ever debarred from arriving at superior rank or power. In civilized countries, a woman acquires some power by being the mother of a numerous family, who obey her maternal authority, and defend her honour and her life. But even as a mother, a female savage gains little; her children daily accustomed to see their father treat her nearly as a slave, soon begin to imitate his example, and either pay little regard to her authority, or shake it off altogether. Of this the young Hottentots afford a remarkable proof; the boys are brought up by their mothers till about the age of puberty, when they are taken from them, and with several ceremonies initiated into the society of the men; after which it is reckoned manly for them to take the earliest opportunity of returning to the hut of their mother, and beating her in the most barbarous manner, to shew that they are now out of her jurisdiction: nor is this a private act, for should the mother complain to the men of the Kraal, they would only applaud the boy, for shewing so laudable a contempt of the society and authority of women.

Slavish condition of savage women.

To support this single evidence of the wretched condition of women in savage life, we have unhappily too many collateral proofs. The most rude and barbarous states of human existence, are these employed wholly in fishing, hunting, and war; and wherever we find the men altogether employed in this manner, we find the women either totally neglected, or destined to every
slavish,

flavish, and to every laborious office. In the Brazils, women are obliged to follow their husbands to war, and, supplying the place of beasts of burden, to carry their children, provisions, hammocks, and every thing wanted in the field, on their backs. And in the isthmus of Darien, they send their women along with warriors and travellers, to answer every purpose of our baggage-horses.

IN every despotic state slavery is a chain; the prince at the head of it oppresses his courtiers, they oppress the inferior officers, the inferior officers oppress the whole of the subjects, and every subject oppresses the women; and so contemptible is the sex, in some countries, that even an alliance with the first despot of it confers on them neither dignity nor privilege. The sovereign of Giaga in Africa does not exempt his own wives from the slavish customs of the country; one carries his bow, another his arrows, a third his provisions, &c.; and when he eats or drinks, they are obliged all to fall down on their knees in token of respect. The wives and daughters of his subjects are condemned in the fields to toil along with the slaves, while the men, not less cruel than idle, many times to stimulate them to labour, bestow an equal degree of correction upon both. Mamood the Second, emperor of Hindostan, at that time one of the richest and most extensive monarchies on the globe, contrary to the custom of his country, had only one wife, whom he obliged to do every part of his household drudgery. One day having complained, that she had burnt her fingers in baking his bread, and desired that he would allow her a maid to assist her, “I am,” said he, “only a trustee for the state, and determined not to burden it with needful expences;” a speech more adapted to the patriotic pride of a Greek or Roman, than to the luxurious effeminacy of the

the East; as it demonstrated, that every spark of love, and even of humanity, were lost in attention to his country.

THE fondness of a woman for her offspring is so remarkable, that in Scripture it is represented as the most powerful of all human feelings: “ Can a woman forget her sucking child?” Yet, to such a degree is the ill-usage of the sex carried in some savage countries, that it even obliterates this feeling, and induces them to destroy the female children of their own body, that they may thereby save them from that wretchedness to which they themselves are subject. Father Joseph Gumilla, reproving one of the female inhabitants of the banks of the Oronooka, for this inhuman crime, received the following answer: “ I wish to God, Father, I wish
“ to God, that my mother had, by my death, prevented the ma-
“ nifold distresses I have endured, and have yet to endure
“ as long as I live; had she kindly stifled me in my birth, I
“ should not have felt the pain of death, nor the numberless
“ other pains to which life has subjected me. Consider, Father,
“ our deplorable condition, our husbands go to hunt with their
“ bows and arrows, and trouble themselves no farther; we are
“ dragged along with one infant at our breast, and another in a
“ basket: they return in the evening without any burden, we
“ return with the burden of our children; and though tired with
“ long walking, are not allowed to sleep, but must labour the
“ whole night in grinding maize to make *chica* for them: they
“ get drunk, and in their drunkenness beat us, draw us by the
“ hair of the head, and tread us under foot: and what have we
“ to comfort us for slavery, perhaps of twenty years?—A young
“ wife is brought in upon us, and permitted to abuse us and our
“ children. Can human nature endure such tyranny?—What
“ kindness

“kindness can we shew to our female children, equal to that of
 “relieving them from such servitude, more bitter a thousand
 “times than death? I repeat again, Would to God, my mo-
 “ther had put me under ground the moment I was born *!”

Perhaps this complaint may be a little exaggerated; but should even the great outlines of it be true, they fully evince the deplorable condition of savage women: and that they may be true, appears from many similar instances among barbarous nations.

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The Greenlanders, who live mostly upon seals, think it sufficient to catch and bring them on shore, and would rather almost submit to starve, than assist their women in dragging the cumbrous animals home, in skinning, or in dressing them. In some parts of America, when the men kill any game in the woods, they fix a mark to a tree, at the root of which they lay it, and travelling

* Shocking as this description may appear, it is greatly exceeded by two others exhibited by the Abbe Raynal, in his History of the European Settlements; the one by the Spaniards, and the other by the French and English. We have thought proper to mention them in a note, as they are practised by people whom we do not class among savages, and therefore we cannot, with so much propriety, insert them in the text. Speaking of the first settlement of St. Domingo, “The natives, says he, were indiscriminately chained together like beasts; those who sunk under their burdens, were compelled to rise by blows. No intercourse passed between the sexes but by stealth; the men perished in the mines, and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their constitutions, already exhausted with excessive labour, were still further impaired by an unwholesome and scanty diet; the mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, pressing their dead or dying infants to their breasts, shrivelled and contracted for want of a proper supply of milk. The fathers either poisoned themselves, or hanged themselves on those very trees on which they had just seen their wives and their children expire. The whole race became extinct.” In another place, speaking of the slaves of the Europeans in general, he observes, “That such hard labour is required of negroe women, both before and after their pregnancy, that their children are either abortive, or live but a short time after delivery; mothers, rendered desperate by the punishments which the weakness of their condition occasions them, snatch sometimes their children from the cradle, in order to strangle them in their arms, and sacrifice them with a fury mingled with a spirit of revenge and compassion, that they may not become the property of their cruel masters.”

many

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many miles home, send their women to bring it to their habitation; a task which their own laziness and pride equally forbid. Among many of the tribes of wandering Arabs, the women are not only obliged to do every domestic and every rural work; but also, to take care of the horses, which they are obliged to feed, to dress, to bridle and saddle, for the use of their husbands. The Moorish women, besides being obliged to do all the same kinds of drudgery, have also some few fields to cultivate; the whole of that labour likewise falls upon them, while their husbands stand idle spectators of the toil, or sleep inglorious beneath a neighbouring shade. In few savage countries are women admitted to the honour of eating and drinking with the men; but are obliged to stand and wait upon them while at meals, to serve them with whatever they call for, and, after all, to sit down themselves and eat up the refuse of what they have left; which, unless in times of great plenty, is commonly but a penurious repast. In Madura, the husband generally speaks to his wife in the most imperious and contemptuous tone; while she, with fear and trembling, approaches him, and pronounces not his name, but with the addition of every dignity and title she can devise; while, in return for all this submission, he frequently beats and abuses her in the most barbarous manner. Being asked the reason of such a behaviour, one of them answered, "As our wives are so much our
" inferiors, why should we allow them to eat and drink with
" us? If they commit faults, why should they not suffer correc-
" tion? It is their business only to bring up our children, pound
" our rice, make our oil, and do every other kind of drudgery,
" purposes to which only their low and inferior natures are
" adapted."

AMONG some of the negroes on the coast of Guinea, a wife is never allowed to appear before her husband, nor to receive any thing from his hand, but in a kneeling posture. In some parts of America women are not allowed to be present at their temples, or join in their religious assemblies; and in the houses where the chiefs meet to consult on affairs of state, they are only suffered to enter and seat themselves on the floor, on each side of the passage. In Hindostan they are not allowed to give evidence in any court; and so difficult is it to shake off the customs of barbarity, that this privilege was but lately granted them in Scotland. Some of the Caribs, who are remarkable for the slavery of their women, being asked, why they held them in subjection? “ We subject
“ our women,” said they, “ because they are weaker than us,
“ while in Europe a whole nation of you submit to one man,
“ who is perhaps not so strong as any of you; and even some-
“ times, we are told, to one woman, a thing of which we have
“ no idea.” In the kingdom of Potany, so low is the condition of women, that numbers of female slaves are kept by the great, not to satisfy the appetite of their master, nor to do his necessary business, but to be hired out to strangers for the purposes of prostitution. Most of our readers, we presume, are not ignorant of the Circassian custom of breeding young girls on purpose to be sold in the public market to the highest bidder. But we decline the subject, afraid that if the matter be scrupulously examined into, it will be found, that women are in some degree bought and sold in every county whether savage or civilized.

To all these indignities offered to the sex, we may add the general custom in many savage countries, of presenting their wives and young women indiscriminately to strangers for hire;

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of making them dance naked before them; and of divorcing, and even in some places of Tartary*, of destroying their wives almost at pleasure. Such, in general, is the picture of savage life; more particular figures might easily be added to the group of which it is composed, but we are afraid that it is already sufficiently disgusting to our fair readers, and would not willingly make it more so. Women so oppressed with slavery, and irritated by ill usage, can have no affection for their husbands, and but little for their children; and when an opportunity of shaking off the yoke is offered, it is no wonder that they betray the one, and leave to fortune, or trample upon, the other. This was verified in the women of South America. When the Spaniards first arrived in these regions, the sex soon discovered that they treated them in a very different manner from that of the natives, and while the unfortunate remains of the men were endeavouring to separate themselves from the sword that pursued them, by immense deserts and almost impenetrable forests; the women ran in crowds over the bodies of their murdered husbands and children, to enjoy a consequence and kindness in the arms of the Spaniards, which so much the more delighted them, as they had never been accustomed to it. To the attachment of these women we may, in a great measure, ascribe the conquest of the New World; they usually served the Spaniards as guides, fre-

* Of this Dr. Cook relates a recent example, "Some young men belonging to my hospital," says he, "returning home one evening, and having been overtaken with liquor, as they passed by the Kalmuck tents they went in and gave a woman liquor to intoxicate her; the husband not being present gave them opportunities of using what liberties they pleased; in short, it was said she was caught by her husband in the very act. He dismissed her guests without quarrelling with them, put his wife to death, and, next morning, I, with others, saw him dragging the dead body towards a bridge, from the middle of which he threw it into the river."

quently

quently procured them subsistence, and sometimes betrayed the conspiracies formed against them.

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ALTHOUGH such in general is the behaviour of savages toward their women, yet, like all other human actions, that behaviour is not so uniformly of a piece, as not to admit, now and then, of being chequered with something which has more the appearance of softness and of humanity. This inconsistency of behaviour, more or less, takes place in all nations, and is an incontestible proof that manners and customs are every where more the offspring of chance, than of systematic arrangement. Among the Hurons, and Iroquois, though women are in every other respect treated as slaves, such is the power of matrons over their own families, that they can prevail upon them to go to war, or desist from it, as they please; and, if a matron even wishes to engage in a war party, any one who is not connected with her, either with a view to appease the ghosts of any of her slain relations, or to procure prisoners to supply their places, she has only to make him a present of a collar, or a necklace of shells, which operates as the mandate of a fair lady did in the times of chivalry, and seldom fails of engaging the champion to take up the hatchet in her favour.

Some instances of better usage.

WHEN the Iroquois return from war, if they have taken any prisoners, they constantly set apart some of them for the use of the public, and these the council of the nation dispose of as they think proper. But such, in this particular, is the power of the mothers of families, that they may, if they please, invalidate this determination of the council, and dispose of the prisoners otherwise, or become sole arbitresses of the life or death of such

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as have been absolved or condemned by it. We have already observed that the dignity of a chief among savages, depending upon personal prowess, is commonly elective. Among the Hurons it is, however, not only hereditary, but descends in the female line, so that it is not the son of the chief, but his sister's son who succeeds him; and if this whole line be extinct, then the sole power of choosing another chief is vested in the noblest matron. Every Huron chief is assisted by a council, and one of this council must be chosen out of every distinguished family; this choice too is the prerogative of the women, and they may, and even sometimes do, appoint one of their own sex. It is farther related by some authors, that every thing among this people is transacted in the name of the women; but those who have had the best opportunities of being acquainted with their politics assure us, that this authority is no more than nominal, and that the men acquaint the women only with such affairs as they think proper, and make use of their names as in other countries one does the seal of an office.

Privileges
among the
Natches.

AMONG the Natches the supreme authority is also hereditary, and descends not only in the female line, but seems to devolve equally on a male and female of that line; the male is called the man chief, and the female the woman chief. The woman chief is not the wife, but the sister, or other nearest female relation of the man chief. She is attended by as numerous a retinue, and has the same authority, deference, and respect, as the man chief; but these are not all, she has, besides, the most singular female privilege that history gives any account of: when she dies, not only her husband, but even all her retinue, are obliged to follow her into the other world, that she may there be served and
attended

attended upon by them, in the same manner as in this. We shall have occasion to mention afterward, that in the East it has been a custom time immemorial, for wives to burn themselves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, and for the slaves, and even horses of the great, to be buried with them, in order to serve them in the other world; but this is the only instance we find of a husband being obliged to sacrifice himself to the manes of his wife; and even this instance will not so much excite our amazement, when we consider that the Natches worship the sun, and that the woman chief is by them held as a descendant of that luminary; while the man to whom she is married is but a common, and generally an inferior mortal, that she may the more easily govern and enslave him in life, as well as at death, and in the world to come. Something similar to this is practised by the Africans about Zaara, where birth and rank impart to some women a right of choosing a husband, whom they keep in extreme subjection, and even condemn to the most abject slavery, when dissatisfied with his conduct or condescension. The sisters of the Grand Seignior are also generally married to the officers of that tyrant, whom they govern with the most absolute sway. From this honour and deference paid to the woman chief among the Natches, we would naturally imagine that the condition of their women should be in general preferable to what it is among other savages; and we meet with a few anecdotes in their history, which seem to hint that some other females, besides the great woman chief, have particular privileges and honours conferred on them; but however this be, it is certain that the sex are in general condemned to the same slavery as in other parts of America.

AMONG

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VIII.Personal li-
berty enjoyed
by all savages.

AMONG the few female privileges which glimmer through the horrid scene of savage life, that of personal liberty is undoubtedly the greatest; the love of savages is seldom directed so much to any individual as to the sex in general; hence they have little jealousy, at least not enough to prompt them to confine their women: but, though in many savage countries they are so far from being jealous of, that they will even offer their wives to strangers; in others, they seem tenacious of the rights of the husband, and afraid of every strange invader. Captain Wallis, in his passage through the straits of Magellan, having sent out a boat to go on shore, some of the natives who were on board his ship leaped into their canoes and paddled after her, shouting and making a great noise; the people in the ship could not understand the meaning of this, those in the boat were as much at a loss, till they approached the shore, when they discovered some women gathering muscles among the rocks, who, on hearing the alarm from their countrymen, ran away as fast they could scour. No people seem more rude and barbarous than the inhabitants of this coast, and yet, from this fear, it seems they are not entirely strangers to jealousy; a passion, which, though far from being the general characteristic of savages, is yet in several other places to be found among them. But then, it is commonly the paroxysm of an hour which rages violently and again subsides, till a new occasion call it forth, and not that settled and cautious suspicion of warmer regions, and half civilized people, to whom,

——— trifles light as air,

Are confirmations strong, and proofs as holy writ.

Savage wo-
men have
little pro-
perty.

THAT women should have much property, among a people who hardly possess any thing but the provisions of the present hour,

hour, and the empty walls of a miserable hut, is not to be expected; of what little there is, they have, however, commonly a share; but the clothes, arms, and utensils belonging to savages, being often buried along with them, and the land, for the most part, the property of the community, there is seldom any thing to inherit that is worth transmitting from one generation to another. Dignity is hereditary only among the Hurons and Natches; in almost every other barbarous country it is but imperfectly known. Authority is derived solely from personal strength and courage, and hardly attended with any badges of distinction. In polite countries, women share in some degree the authority, and generally the honour of their husbands; in savage life they share in neither. It is, however, of some little advantage to be married to a war chief, and in some places to be the mother of a numerous family, who can provide for, or defend them when necessary. The privilege of precedency, which in Europe has the power of fascinating almost every female mind, does not disturb the peace of savages, nor kindles up a spark of envy in their breasts. What we formerly observed of the women of the ancient Germans, Celtes, and Gauls, may be equally applied to the savage women of the present times; they are commonly their only physicians and surgeons, and, in some cases, are possessed of secrets, by which they have cured diseases that have baffled the skill of expert European physicians. This sometimes procures them a little more regard, and gives them a greater consequence than they would otherwise enjoy, but they derive still a greater degree of consequence from a superstitious source; many of them are supposed to be endowed with a supernatural, or magical power of curing diseases, and making discoveries in futurity; ignorance often applies to these, to recover what it has lost, or to procure what

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what it desires; and, however they may be treated at other times, they are sure, on these occasions, to have the liberty of doing and directing as they please.

FROM these rude scenes of uncultivated nature, where the ills that attend on female life are so numerous, and its privileges so few; let us now turn our eyes towards such people as, in their progressive state, have shook off the rudeness of the most savage barbarity, and are beginning to advance to a social and civil condition.

Condition of
women a-
mong people
advancing
from rudeness
to civiliza-
tion.

THE first step which a people sunk in brutality of manners commonly make towards cultivation, is by beginning to bestow some attention on the future, as well as on the present hour, and to provide against those times of scarcity, whose severity their own neglect and inattention has brought upon them so often, and with such accumulated misery; this, a little consideration easily points out to them to be most readily accomplished, by turning from the predatory to the pastoral state; and so having constantly in their possession a stock of tame animals, any of which they can take and use at such times and seasons when they cannot find a supply of provisions in the rivers and forests around them. In this state are the greatest part of the wandering hordes of Tartars and Arabs, who, by pasturage alone, procure to themselves no uncomfortable subsistence. As this is but one step in the progress from savage to civil life, the progress of female improvement has among them advanced but one step also; the passion for dress, a passion so natural to the sex, wherever they meet with the least kind indulgence, begins to shew itself; while among the rudest savages, it is repressed by unkindness, and

and often obliterated by oppression. Women only dress to give an additional lustre to their charms, and only wish to be charming to please the men; but, where the love of the men is directed more to the sex than the individual, a woman has no motive to excite even a wish of being superiorly beautiful. On the contrary, where love is directed more to the individual than to the sex, where the men distinguish by a peculiar attention and regard her, who has the art, by ornament and dress, to appear more charming than her companions, who are not less beholden to nature; there, the most powerful motive to appear beautiful is held out. The passion for ornament among the Tartars and Arabs proceeds from this source: the men are fond of seeing their wives loaded with finery, and will undergo any hardship, or part almost with any thing but their horses, to procure it for them.

THERE are a variety of places in Africa, and even some in Asia, where, although the inhabitants have arrived at the pastoral state, they appear but a little removed from the barbarity of the mere fisher and hunter; but, where they have carried the ideas of association and civilization so far, as to apply themselves to agriculture, they are in general somewhat more humane, and the effects of that humanity shew themselves, in some parts of their behaviour, to the fair sex; we are not, however, to imagine that this rule is general, but, like all others, liable to many exceptions.

ON some parts of the coast of Guinea, the women are even so far distinguished as to have a vote in their public assemblies; while in many others, their condition is wretched beyond our imagination. On the banks of the Niger, the women are generally handsome, if beauty can consist in symmetry of features,

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and not in colour ; they are modest, affable, and faithful, and an air of innocence appears in their looks and in their language, which is inexpressibly soft ; their men, not insensible of these perfections, treat them with a friendship, and a softness of love beyond the reach of the frigid ideas of a northern. When we approach more towards the East, the complexion and character of the Africans become worse. Situated in an ungrateful soil, hardly improvable by culture, they are obliged to subsist mostly upon the produce of their bow and of their hook ; their women have not the amiable modesty, nor engaging beauty of those on the banks of the Niger ; their language, like the soil they inhabit, is harsh and disagreeable ; and they are to the men objects of but little love, and have almost no political consequence.

IN the island of Formosa, and among some tribes of the Peruvians, daughters are more regarded than sons, because, as soon as a woman is married, contrary to the custom of other countries, she brings her husband home with her to her father's house, and he becomes one of the family ; so that parents derive support and family-strength from the marriage of a daughter ; whereas sons, on their marriage, leave the family for ever. Besides the inhabitants of the banks of the Niger, there are several other people in Africa who do not treat their women with that rudeness and barbarity, which we should naturally expect from a people so little cultivated. In particular there is one tribe distinguished by the name of Pholeys, whose constant maxim is, if possible, to live in peace ; who are no indifferent proficients in some of the arts of civil life ; and, perhaps, second to no people on earth in benevolence and humanity : their women have all the advantages of society, and all the indulgence of friendship and of love.

THOUGH

THOUGH pasturage, agriculture, and every thing that brings mankind into society, is generally in favour of women; yet the first efforts of a people in agriculture commonly lay an additional load of labour on the shoulders of that sex; so that they lose, at first, by an institution, which afterwards turns greatly to their advantage. This is the case in many parts of Asia and Africa; imperfectly acquainted with the cultivation of the ground, it yields them but an indifferent increase; to cultivate it is, therefore, considered as an employment not worthy of the time of men, but only fit for women, who cannot in any other thing employ themselves to greater advantage. Hence, to all the labours to which they had formerly been accustomed, is added those of digging the ground, sowing the seed, and reaping the harvest; toils which, in a sultry climate, must be exceedingly disagreeable to the delicate constitutions of a sex, which nature seems to have formed for softer purposes. But we have already had occasion to enumerate too many of the evils to which that sex are subjected; we shall therefore now rather trace their improvement towards that state in which we find them in polished society, than backwards to that savage one, over which, for the sake of humanity, we would wish to throw a veil.

THOUGH politeness teaches us to consider the confinement of women as an unlawful exertion of superior power, and to shudder at it as an unmerited severity; yet we find it practised almost all over Asia, Africa, and even in some parts of Europe: but what seems rather extraordinary, is, that wherever it takes place, it affords a demonstrative proof of the inhabitants being arrived some degrees farther in civilization than mere savages, who have hardly any love, and, consequently, as little jealousy; who, not regarding

Of the confinement of women.

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their women so much as to be solicitous about their good behaviour, give the loose to their freedom, and are unconcerned about their conduct.

THIS confinement of the sex, which we shall have occasion to discuss more fully afterward, does not appear to be extremely rigid in the empire of the Mogul; it is, perhaps, less so in China, and in Japan hardly exists. In the dominions of the Grand Signior, women are more strictly guarded; and in Persia have, time immemorial, hardly enjoyed the least degree of liberty; so powerful is the rage of jealousy, and so rooted the opinion of female frailty. But though women are confined in the Turkish empire, they experience every other indulgence; they are allowed, at stated times, to go to the public baths; their apartments are richly, if not elegantly furnished; they have a train of female slaves to serve and amuse them; and their persons are adorned with every costly ornament, which their fathers or husbands can afford: in short, their situation, upon the whole, seems so eligible, that lady Montague scruples not to affirm, that they are the only free and happy women on the globe; though we rather suspect, that her ladyship would not have changed her English freedom for all the finery and gloom of the first Haram, or even of the seraglio of Constantinople. Notwithstanding the strictness of confinement in Persia, their women are treated with several indulgences; perhaps to divert their attention from brooding on the wretchedness of their situation, they are loaded with the finest silks, and ornamented with the jewels of the East; but all these trappings, however elegant, or however gilded, are only like the golden chains sometimes made use of to bind a royal prisoner.

THE

THE Mahomedan women, in the empire of the Mogul, are rather of more consequence than either in Turkey or in Persia. Among the lower and middling ranks, they are not strictly confined; and in the seraglio, they sometimes acquire no small influence over the despot, at whose frown so extensive an empire trembles. Noor-Jehan, whom we formerly mentioned by the name of Mher-ul-Nissa, having become the favourite wife of the emperor Jehangire, soon afterward placed her own relations in almost all the principal employments of the empire, introduced such luxury and magnificence, that to use the words of an oriental writer, “expensive pageants, and sumptuous entertainments, became the whole business of the court; the voice of music never ceased by day in the street, and the sky was enlightened at night with fireworks and illuminations; her name was joined with that of the emperor on the current coin; she was the spring which moved the machine of the state; her family took rank immediately after the princes of the blood, and were admitted even to the most secret apartments of the seraglio.” Such, however, was only the influence of superior beauty, and superior sense: it was not common for women to govern in this manner; though they frequently moved in degrees of inferior consequence. The seraglios of people of rank are guarded with a stricter severity than those of the lower order; such people, every where, have a mixture of pride and jealousy, which far surpasses the simple feelings of the clown: besides the disagreeableness of perfidy in his women, the grandee adds to it, the stain which his honour would suffer, should any of them be corrupted by one of inferior quality; and even the women themselves are said to glory in their confinement, as it conceals them from vulgar eyes; and there have been instances, where they rather chose to be burned

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to death, when their apartments had accidentally taken fire, than submit to the indelicacy of being exposed to public view.

Power of husbands in the Haram.

WHERE so great a number of wives and concubines are allowed, an almost unlimited power is necessary to restrain them from the utmost disorder and confusion. This power is the same despotism in miniature, which prevails in the state; and has the same effect upon the passions, reducing them all under the dominion of fear. Even female jealousy, which, in other countries, transports the soul into the regions of fury and despair, is curbed within the walls of a Haram; the women may there repine in secret, but they must clothe their features with cheerfulness when their lord appears; contumacy only draws down on them immediate punishment; they are degraded, chastised, divorced; and even put to death, according to the degree of their crime, or the indignation they have excited: their friends may murmur in secret at their fate; but there is no redress in the laws of their country, nor does public justice take any cognizance of the affairs of the Haram: Though the laws of Hindostan suffer women thus to be abused, yet so sacred are their persons, that they must not in the least be violated, nor even looked at by any one but their husbands. This female privilege has given an opportunity of executing many conspiracies; warriors, in such carriages as are usually employed to convey women, have been often conveyed, without examination, into the apartments of the great; from whence, instead of issuing forth in the smiles of beauty, they have rushed out in the terror of arms, and laid the tyrant at their feet.

Tenacious of the chailly of their wives.

THE concealment of their women is a sacred tenet among the Mahomedans of Hindostan; even brothers cannot visit their sisters

sisters in private; and strangers must, upon no account, see them; for another to be conscious of the existence of a man's wives seems even a crime; and he looks furly and offended if their health is enquired after: in every country, honour consists in that which a man is most solicitous to secure; this, in Hindostan, is the chastity of his wives; a point, without which, the Asiatic must not live. This opinion the despot always encourages; as the possession of the women of his most powerful subjects, is the best pledge of their fidelity, when without the reach of his immediate chastisement: when the governor of a province falls under the suspicion of his prince, the first step taken against him, is, an order that he shall send his women to court: if he sends but one, though far from being his greatest favourite, she is considered as the most inviolable security for his good behaviour: if he hesitates, or promises obedience at some future period, when it shall be more convenient, he is immediately declared a rebel; his affection for the woman whom he sent as a hostage, is not considered as the tie which binds him to fidelity, but his honour is placed in her person; and that honour, in case of disloyalty, would be in the power of his sovereign to violate. So sacred are women in India, that, even in the midst of slaughter and devastation, the common foldier leaves them unmolested; the Haram is a sanctuary against all the licentiousness of victory; and ruffians, covered with the blood of a husband, shrink back with veneration from the secret apartment of his wives. Whether this depends upon custom, or on religion, is uncertain; but it is not altogether confined to India. At Constantinople, when the Sultan sends an order to strangle a state-criminal, and to seize on his effects; the ruffians, who execute it, enter not into the Haram, nor touch any thing belonging to the women.

BUT

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Women ill-
treated in
spite of this
sacredness of
person.

BUT in spite of all this seeming veneration, this sacredness of person, the women of Asia are, in general, only a kind of cyphers, held up to be the sport of fortune; subjected, not only to the nod of a tyrant lord, but also to his eunuchs, still more merciless and tyrannical. Educated in a manner which tends only to debase their minds, by obliterating their virtues; torn with jealousy and chagrin, even their pleasures are joyless; and in a very few years, their period of youth and beauty being over, that of neglect, which is long and unsupportable, commences. Solomon had threescore queens, and fourscore concubines; but a petty Hindoo chief has been known to have two thousand women confined within the walls of his Haram; and appropriated to his pleasure only. Strange that the rights of humanity and of population should be so publicly violated! but they are not violated by the Asiatics alone; the Europeans, caught with the contagion, have imitated their example. The Portuguese, after their first settlement in India, became so debauched, that many of them had seven or eight concubines; which they did not confine like the natives, but obliged them to labour, and forced from them the money they had earned; nor have other Europeans refrained from debaucheries, which disgraced their religion and their humanity.

THE whole of the ancient inhabitants of Hindostan, distinguished by the name of Hindoos, are divided into classes, or casts, every one of which rises gradually in rank and dignity above another; and every one of which most rigidly keeps within itself, nor ever mixes, either by marriage or any kind of connection, with those beneath it: hence women have not, as in
other

other countries, an opportunity of advancing themselves by marriage; being obliged to marry into the cast to which they belong: the Hindoo women are not, however, guarded with that strictness and severity, which is exercised over the Mahomedans. In some places, even those of considerable rank appear publicly in the street. In Ethiopia, the women are of more consequence than among the Mahomedans, or Hindoos of Asia. Poncet tells us, that the sister of the reigning emperor, while he was there, had a palace of her own, appeared frequently in public, mounted on a mule richly caparisoned, and surrounded by four or five hundred women, sounding tabors and singing verses in her praise. In China, which, for politeness of manners, is little inferior to any part of Europe, women seem to enjoy the same rank, and to share in the honours and dignities of their husbands. The emperor may raise to the dignity of empress, any one of his women whom he pleases; and we are informed by Duhalde, that on an occasion of this nature, “after all the great officers and mandarins
“had paid their compliments to the emperor, the princesses of the
“blood, and all the ladies of the first quality, with the wives of
“the great mandarins, went to the palace; into which being
“introduced, according to their rank, by a mistress of the ceremonies, the first eunuch presented himself, whom the mistress
“of the ceremonies thus addressed: I humbly beseech the empress, in behalf of this assembly, to vouchsafe her presence, and
“place herself on the throne; which she having done, all the
“ladies made two curtsies, fell on their knees, and struck their
“foreheads against the ground; then stood up, in the same order,
“in the profoundest silence, while the empress descended from the
“throne and withdrew.” Though honours of such a nature are paid to a Chinese empress, and to every woman according to her

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rank, yet the fair sex are hardly entrusted with any property, and have no fortunes. Circumstances which, though at first view we may consider as an affront and indignity, are, notwithstanding, among the Chinese, symptoms of love and regard. That wife people, solicitous of their own happiness, and of that of the sex, endeavour, by this means, to prevent a woman from being chosen as a wife, on the sordid motives of interest and avarice. A wife, therefore, being constantly chosen from love, and having no separate interest from that of her husband, nor any independence to render her undutiful and impertinent, the chain of matrimony, which in many other countries is made of iron, is, in China, only a filken cord. In Japan, the women of the Deyario, or great hereditary emperor and high priest, seem to be venerated and honoured in a degree not much inferior to himself. And in Siam, we have an account, by Kempfer, of a funeral of one of their queens; so magnificent, as to leave no room to doubt that the women are not considered there in a despicable light.

Condition of
the Asiatic
women, che-
quered with
good and evil.

BEFORE we take our leave of Asia, it may not be improper to observe, that the account here given of the condition of their women; an account strangely chequered with good and evil, but in which the evil, for the most part, greatly predominates, may be materially different from the ideas conceived of it by our fair readers, who have formed their opinions from eastern tales and romances; which, if not contradicted by facts, would impose upon us a belief, that their women were the most beautiful, and the most happy beings in the creation; because the men constantly approach them in the most submissive manner, while every flowery epithet, for which the eastern language is so remarkable,

hangs upon their tongue; and every promise they make, is to last for life, or for eternity. But the reverse of the picture shews us, that they keep in the cruelest subjection and confinement, the beings they seem to adore; and while they appear to humble themselves at their feet, are actually the jailors who confine, and the tyrants who enslave them. Even among the Chinese, whom we may reckon the politest of the Asiatics, wives are sometimes strangled at the death of their husbands, that they may go and serve them in the other world.

SUCH as we have described, is the condition of women, among many of those people who hold a kind of middle rank, between savage barbarity and civilization; but as the culture of manners, and of the social principle among mankind, does not always proceed upon an uniform plan, but is varied, according to the genius, to the necessities, and to a thousand other circumstances, we find one nation often excelling another in one or two points of refinement, while in every other point of the same kind, it is greatly behind it. Thus, in Otaheite, an island lately discovered in the South Sea, the inhabitants, though hitherto unacquainted with any part of the globe, but a few more islands scattered around them; though sons of pure nature, and almost entirely fed and clothed by her hand; though without the least knowledge of art, or glimmering of science, are, nevertheless, social among themselves, civil and polite to the fair sex, allowing them every rank and dignity, and even the supreme authority of the island, when it is their birthright; treating them with a deference and indulgence, which the weakness and softness of their nature seems to require; and yet, though they have carried their politeness

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thus far; though the two sexes constantly live together in promiscuous society; at meals, which bring the people of polite nations together, the sexes in Otaheite are separated. The women sometimes serve the men at their repasts; but never eat with them, or in their company; so that it is presumable, the action of eating or drinking is, in this island, ranked among the number of female indelicacies: we, who are constantly used to other manners and customs, reckon it extraordinary that women should refuse to eat in the presence of men; but it is still more extraordinary, that some of the chiefs of this people, either from a principle of pride, or for some other reason that we are not acquainted with, will not deign to put any thing into their own mouths, but, like children, must be constantly fed by their women. Perhaps the same cause, which induces the Otaheitean to this flabbering dignity, operating in Europe, would induce a man to be served in plate, or to ride in his coach; in the East, to burn costly perfumes, add more beauties to those already languishing in his seraglio, and more slaves to those who attend on his person; and, in America, to hang more of the ghastly spoils of war round his body, and add to the natural ferocity of his visage, by painting himself frightful.

It is somewhat remarkable, that over the greatest part of America, which, at present, may be called the native country of savage barbarism, the men have in general but one wife; while in Asia and Africa, where they are commonly a little more civilized, an unrestrained polygamy should still take place; and that, while in many other respects they treat their women better, this custom, which gives them their rivals for their inseparable companions, should not have been abolished. But so permanent and

unalterable are the customs of the East, and particularly this of a plurality of wives, that, in all probability, it will be among the last of the chains of female slavery that will be broken; and if we can believe many of the missionaries, who were sent to propagate Christianity among them, there were none of the precepts of that religion, which they found so much difficulty of making them conform to, as that of confining themselves to one wife; a thing which they thought so absurd and unreasonable, that they could not believe it to be agreeable to the will of the great Lord of the universe.

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*The same Subject continued.*C H A P.
IX.

IN these imperfect sketches, which we have already given of the rank and condition of ancient and modern women, we are sorry to say, that it was long before we found them getting into possession of the common rights of mankind; that at present, in more than one quarter of the globe, they are the most abject slaves; and in much more than another, perpetual prisoners: while in that little corner of it, called Europe, they only possess the consequence to which they seem entitled by nature, in the scale of intelligent beings. It is, therefore, with pleasure we now arrive at that part of our history, which leads us to consider their condition in polished and civil society; which, in other words, is considering it only in Europe; after having seen it in a light, which does so little honour to our sex, and adds so much wretchedness to theirs, in every other part of the globe.

Treatment of
women in
Europe.

BUT though the fair sex are, in Europe, commonly treated with an affection and indulgence, which in other parts they are either quite strangers to, or only enjoy on particular occasions; yet, as all Europe is not equally cultivated in manners, the condition of women is not in every part of it equally eligible.

RUSSIA,

RUSSIA, which we consider as an European nation, though comprehending in its dominions a part of Asia, has only begun a few years ago to assume the polish of the Europeans; and is as yet far from having attained that softness of behaviour, which must distinguish every people before they can treat, with propriety, a sex, whose acute feelings, both of body and of mind, demand lenity and indulgence. The condition of women in Russia is, therefore, much less desirable than it is in England, France, or Italy. A late empress of Russia, as a punishment for some female frailties, ordered a most beautiful young lady of family to be publicly knouted, in a manner which was hardly less indelicate than severe. The same empress, at another time, allowed several ladies of the first quality to suffer the punishment of the knout publicly, and afterwards to have their tongues cut out: while these cruel sentences were executing, they were exposed on the backs of men, with no covering, but a scanty petticoat. Such were the Russians only a few years ago; when in every other part of Europe, and even among people whom we call barbarians, the law, when necessarily obliged to inflict punishment on female delinquents, never violated the rules of decency. It has been asserted by many travellers, that a Russian bride, on her wedding-night presented the bridegroom with a whip of her own making, in token of her subjection; and thought herself much slighted, if he did not immediately make a trial of it upon her person. Later travellers, however, assure us, that if ever such a custom did exist, they could find no remaining traces of it at present.

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Disadvantages of the
Russian women.

THOUGH the women at Petersburg are not confined to their apartments, they go little abroad, being but just emerging from a state:

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a state of barbarity. In their conversation, and their actions, there is hardly any thing of that softness and delicacy which distinguishes the sex in other parts of Europe; even their exercises and diversions have more of the masculine than the feminine. The present empress, with the ladies of her court, sometimes divert themselves by shooting at a mark. Drunkenness, the vice of almost every cold climate, they are so little ashamed of, that not many years ago, a lady would have returned to the house of her friend the next day, to thank her for doing her the pleasure of making her drunk the day before; nor is it long since the regulations for the assemblies, at the court of Petersburg, contained this remarkable article; an article which, perhaps, is still extant: “ And it is further ordered, that ladies shall not get “ drunk upon any pretence whatever, nor gentlemen before “ nine o’clock.”

Their advantages.

HOWEVER unfavourable this account of the Russian women may appear, their condition is far from being so despicable, as we might from thence naturally imagine. They share the rank and splendour of the families of which they are sprung, and of the husbands with whom they marry; and even the supreme authority; which at present is enjoyed by an empress, whose head does honour to her nation and to her sex; although on some occasions the virtues of her heart have been much suspected. In the military, the widows and daughters, as well as sons of officers, are provided for by government; the widows, if young, are allowed one year’s pay, according to the rank of their husbands, by way of a portion; if old, they have a fourth of the pay of their husbands during life, and their daughters have the same till the age of fifteen; when they are supposed to be fit to marry, or otherwise to provide

provide for themselves. In civil life, the sex are protected from insult by several salutary laws, and, except among the peasants, are exempted from every kind of toil and slavery, enjoy such portions as are given them, or fall to their share by heritage; and, upon the whole, seem approaching fast to the enjoyment of that consequence to which they have already arrived in several parts of Europe.

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IN the other northern countries of Europe, the state of women is, in many respects, but mean and contemptible. In Lapland, Norway, and Poland, they have hardly even separate apartments, except in some houses of their first nobility. Estates, as well those that are acquired, as those that are hereditary, descend to the children in the following proportions: in Poland, a son has always two shares, and a daughter one; nor can a father dispose of his fortune otherwise, without a judicial sentence to enable him so to do. In Denmark, women may succeed as heirs to any inheritance, but no female, of whatever rank or condition, can sell, dispose of, or in any other manner alienate any land, but must leave it to the heir at law, who on her demise is empowered to take possession of it; notwithstanding any devise, bargain, or sale that she may have made in her lifetime to the contrary. In Britain, daughters are excluded from inheriting hereditary estates so long as there are any sons alive; but such estates as the fathers have acquired, they may give to their daughters, or leave to them by will, though they have sons at the same time living. In Piedmont, females cannot inherit a fief as long as any of the male line are alive. Though the British ladies seldom enjoy titles or honours in their own right, yet they constantly share in those of their husbands, wives of bishops and judges only excepted;

Their condition in some others of the northern countries.

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and further, a man of the highest quality, by marrying a woman from the very lowest of the people, confers upon her the same rank and quality as he enjoys himself; whereas no man, however mean, can again altogether reduce her to her original state; the title she had once acquired by her noble husband she retains, by the complaisance of her acquaintance, till death, though she should again be married to the meanest plebeian. English women have never had any power conferred on them to ennoble their husbands, but of late it has not been uncommon to bestow titles and honours on women, in their own right, with a power of transmitting them to their male posterity. In Germany, female honours run in a channel something different from that of Britain, they are only the property of birth, or attainable by marriage, and on the decease of a husband the wife, if she was his inferior, descends to that rank in life which she occupied before marriage. Some writers on the Germanic constitution have alleged that this is a political institution to encourage matrimony among the great; but, as women are seldom averse to this state, to place the loss of being unmarried on their side, is putting the weight into the wrong scale.

Property,
how far vested
in women.

As being vested with the management and disposal of property, whether in goods or estates of inheritance, is a privilege from which women, in most ages and countries, have either been entirely debarred, or enjoyed under a great variety of limitations and restrictions; and as this privilege is one of those which confers the greatest power and dignity, and upon which mankind set the greatest value, we shall endeavour to give our readers some idea how far it has been granted or denied to the sex, whose history we are now considering.

To give portions to women at the time of their marriage was an ancient custom among some nations; Pharaoh gave the city of Gazer as a portion to his daughter when she became the wife of Solomon, king of Israel; but we have great reason to believe that, in such early times, neither the management nor disposal of the portions so given were vested in the person of the wife, but that she, and the dowry which came along with her, were almost equally considered as the property of the husband. Almost the whole history of remote antiquity presents us with a scene, in which women appear too inconsiderable to have acquired any of the goods of fortune, or to have been trusted with them when acquired by their parents or relations. Among the ancient inhabitants of Chaldea and Arabia, we are told, that women could not hold the possession of any inheritance; and the decision of this matter by Moses, shews that, in his time, no precedent had existed of females having any such privilege. The daughters of Zelophehad brought before Moses, the priests, the princes, and the congregation, a petition, setting forth, that their father, after having always demeaned himself properly, had died in the wilderness, having no sons; on which account they thought themselves entitled to a possession among the brethren of their father, which Moses, by the commandment of the Lord, not only granted them, but also ordained, that in future, when a man died, having no sons, his inheritance should become the property of his daughters. A decision, which seems to be the basis on which the succession of women is, in many countries, founded at this day.

As the Egyptians had the greatest esteem and veneration for their women, and even in many things submitted themselves to their direction, we have great reason to believe that they allowed

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them

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them property, and the succession to the estates of their ancestors; especially when we consider that the Greeks, who were originally a colony from Egypt, were, besides the Hebrews, the only people of antiquity, whom we find indulging them with this privilege. The ancient Romans, trained up to war and to arms, to take by conquest the land of their neighbours, and to retain by force what they had thus conquered, had no idea that women should inherit what they could neither conquer nor defend; but fathers, in time, thinking it hard that their sons should be rich in possessions, while their daughters had none; and that more distant male relations should take the estates as heirs at law, contrived to make such provisions for their daughters, as rendered the estates so taken of little value. The people, irritated at this proceeding, and convinced from the relics of barbarity still lurking in their minds, that women ought not to have any inheritance, passed the Voconian law, by which it was ordained, That no woman should be left heiress to an estate, even though an only child; a law, which continued in force till the Romans became more refined and softened in their sentiments, when a regard to the weaker sex broke through the unjust restraint laid upon them, and granted them a right of succession, after the death of brothers, both in moveables and in land.

BARBARIETY of manners is almost every where productive of the same customs. So little did the Lombards think women qualified to inherit estates, that, by their law, even the natural children, distant male relations, and the public treasury, might share the inheritance with daughters. This law was softened among the Saxons, where the father and mother were bound to leave their estate to their sons, and to their daughters if they had

no son. Among the Burgundians, daughters were neither allowed to be heirs in conjunction with sons, nor to succeed to the crown. The Salique lands among the Franks seem to have been of a tenure similar to those in the times of the feudal system, held under a lord, for which the tenant was to perform military service; women were not admitted as inheritors, or tenants of such lands, for a plain reason, because they were not qualified to perform the military service by which they were held; but methods were afterwards discovered to elude this prohibition: he who wanted to make his daughter equal to his son, carried her before the commissary, and said, "My dear child, an ancient and impious custom bars a young woman from succeeding to her father; but as all my children are equally given me by God, I ought to love them equally; therefore, my dear child, my will is, that my effects shall be shared equally between you and your brethren." This Salique law, which in modern France seems little if at all regarded by the subject, is still in force with regard to the crown, no woman ever being allowed to inherit it. But though the French will not suffer a woman to sway their scepter, they cannot hinder her from ruling the monarch which holds it; a case which has so often happened, that, in spite of their Salique law, they have been more under the direction of women than any of the neighbouring kingdoms.

THE laws which preclude females from enjoying property and inheritance have, perhaps, in every other country, beside France, been confined to the subject. Among many of the nations of antiquity, among the present Asiatics, and even in some parts of America, where women in general have no property, and almost no political existence; where it was never heard that they enjoyed any

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any land, nor were even trusted with the management of their own persons, they have been allowed, in failure of male issue, to mount the throne, and manage the affairs of a state; a practice so inconsistent with reason, that the only cause we can assign for it is superstition.

Causes why
women have
no property.

FROM the mean and servile condition of the fair sex in barbarous countries, they seem to be rendered incapable of property. Whatever they acquire by their labour, whatever they take in the chace, is entirely under the administration of the male relations and friends, by whom they are protected, and from whom they receive a scanty and precarious subsistence. Wherever polygamy is countenanced, women cannot possibly enjoy much property: property creates independence; and a woman who is independent would not submit to so many rivals, and so scanty a share of the favours of a husband. Wherever women are strictly confined, they can have no property; any thing further than food and raiment, to them would be unnecessary; and any thing that could not be brought within the walls of a Haram, they could not manage. Wherever the sex are publicly bought and sold, whether as wives or as slaves, they can have but little property; they are in such cases the property transferred themselves, and consequently in a state too mean to be trusted with other property, perhaps reckoned more valuable than they are. When we meet with so great a variety of causes which deprive women of property, when we consider how widely these causes are disseminated, we shall find that it is only in a few of the politer countries of Europe that they are possessed of this privilege, and even there, with such restrictions, that in many cases they can hardly be said to enjoy what they possess; but as we shall have occasion afterwards to treat more fully of the rights and privileges of the
British

British women, which are in a great measure similar to those of the other polished countries in the neighbourhood, we shall not at present anticipate that part of our subject.

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IN those stages of human society that intervene between the most uncultivated state of nature and a taste for elegance and refinement of manners, pageantry and show seem to employ the utmost attention, and to be considered as the only proper appendages of grandeur, strong proofs of which are afforded us by almost all the nations of the East, and by Poland in the North; the Polish women of fashion seldom go to visit one another without being attended by the most numerous train of servants, carriages, and flambeaus they can muster; but when we follow them home, we meet with nothing adequate to this parade; their apartments are but poorly furnished, and but hardly clean, and themselves are the mean and fawning slaves of their husbands, who, except in the articles of equipage and dress, scarcely treat them as rational beings. In Germany, where the taste is in general less formed, the women are more fond of family pageantry, and more crammed with family pride than in France or England. In Italy, of a warmer temperament, they aim more at captivating the heart than the eyes, and have there, as well as in France, attained almost to an absolute dominion over the men; a prerogative which in Portugal seems much on the decline; for though, in the time of Alphonso, when the Portuguese were an honour to human nature, the man who insulted a woman, or broke any promise he had made to her, was degraded from whatever rank he enjoyed; at present, the false gallantry introduced, authorises him to commit every perfidy of that nature with impunity.

Love, pageantry, and show, the delight of women.

IN

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Why treated
with indul-
gence.

IN England, France, Italy, and those other parts of Europe which have arrived nearly at the same degree of politeness; prompted by a mixture of humanity and love, the men have entirely exempted the women from every species of labour, except what is absolutely necessary among the poor for obtaining their daily bread; and even there, it is with pleasure we often observe the rustic clown, while he wipes the sweat from his brow, endeavouring to lighten the burden and alleviate the task of the sun-burnt daughter of labour who toils by his side.

So extensive are the effects of politeness in Europe, that it has not only softened the actions and manners of him who, tutored in the lap of ease, has received the polish of a good education; but of him also who, left to nature, has nothing to boast of but what he received from her hand. This spirit of sympathetic indulgence, or of polite gallantry, does not stop at endeavouring to ease the load of female toil, or to mitigate the severity of that labour for which their natural weakness seems to have incapacitated the sex; it expands itself to every part of the conduct of the men which has any relation to them. We give to a woman, even though of inferior quality, the right hand, shew her every token of respect, and place her in every situation of honour. We lavish our substance upon ornaments for our wives and daughters, and reckon, that when they appear in elegance and taste, they reflect a lustre and credit upon us. We are hurt when they behave improperly, and on the contrary, persuade ourselves that their good conduct adds a dignity to our character and reputation. In short, we are so deeply interested in every thing that relates to them, that they may be considered as the arbiters of our fate, and the spring which sets in motion, and continues to direct, almost every action of our lives;

lives ; such is the indulgence we shew them, and such the power we put into their hands, that a proverbial saying has from thence arisen, that England is the heaven of women, and the hell of horses.

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IN France, Italy, and Spain, the deference paid to women is still greater than in England, and generally proceeds from different motives ; here, the honours we confer upon them flow from a mixture of love for their persons, and esteem of their virtues ; there, it arises, for the most part, only from a kind of customary gallantry, which seems directed more to the sex than the individual. A Frenchman, the moment he is in the company of a woman, whether young or old, beautiful or otherwise, declares himself her admirer, talks of flames and darts, and pays her a thousand compliments on her beauty. An Italian, when he is introduced to a lady, approaches her in the most humble and submissive manner, kisses her hand, and if she is handsome, and of quality, considers her as a sublime being, an angel in a human form, and consequently never to be approached but with the greatest reverence. The Spaniard goes yet a step farther, the whole sex is to him an object of little less than adoration ; he retains still a tincture of the spirit of knight-errantry in every thing relating to women, and will readily venture his life to save any of them from trouble or from danger ; the object of his love is never less than a goddess, whom he always mentions with all the extravagance that metaphor and hyperbola can dictate, and to a woman, above the rank of a peasant, he never presents any thing but in a kneeling posture.

THESE improvements, in the condition of the fair sex of Europe, seem naturally to point out to us, that they are there

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the most happy, as well as the most deserving of beings; but the external appearance of things is but an unfaithful mirrour, whose representation we cannot altogether depend on. Women are in some degree every where the slaves of superior power; in Asia, imprisoned, and constantly reduced to act by the impulse of another, without any will or any inclination which they can gratify, their triumphs lasting only a few moments; their rivalry, animosities, and confinement, till death. In Africa and America, the mere drudges of their proud tyrants, they labour to procure subsistence for themselves and husbands, and when they have done, are treated little better than our dogs; they receive only chastisement and crumbs. In Europe, for the most part, but improperly, or slightly educated; and at all times kept in a state of dependence, by the restrictions of a severe legislation, which, in the management and disposal of what property is allowed them, commonly cramps the freedom of their will. Dishonoured and disgraced beyond all possibility of redemption, by the commission of faults, which in the men are hardly considered as any thing but acts of gallantry; and even in the state of matrimony, a state to which they naturally aspire, more indissolubly bound than their husbands. The law affords them no relief, unless the cruel partner to whom they are tied, has attempted to take away their life; and while he may riot with impunity in adulterous amours, if the wife retaliates, by copying his example, he immediately procures a divorce, and may turn her out without subsistence, to the scorn and contempt of her own sex, who, in such cases, seldom look with pity even on a repenting sinner.

Causes of the
good and ill
treatment of
women.

THOUGH we have marked, as we came along, several of the causes of the good and ill-treatment of women, yet we flatter ourselves

ourselves it may not be improper to conclude this chapter with a more accurate view of them. Were we on this subject to reason from analogy, we should not hesitate to say, that there is in nature a principle, which strongly prompts us to behave with lenity and indulgence to the fair sex; as almost the whole of the irrational creation presents us with a picture of such behaviour: the cock, when he has found any provision, calls his hens together to partake of it; and the males of all the feathered kind, for the most part, provide for the females while hatching. Among quadrupedes, though there appears less indulgence, and even less assistance on the part of the male, yet the former is in many cases very distinguishable, and the latter not altogether unknown to the diligent observers of nature. No male of any species of animals we are acquainted with, will fight with, or use a female of the same species rudely, unless highly provoked; and even then, he will correct her with lenity and seeming reluctance. But while we reason on this subject, if we trust to analogy, it will certainly mislead us. And when we turn ourselves from reasoning upon principles, to the observation of facts, a slight survey of man, in his savage state, will soon convince us, that he has no natural propensity, nor instinct, which determines him to use the females of his species with tenderness and indulgence; or if he has, it is, like many other natural instincts, totally obliterated in his youth by habit and education. We are told, indeed, by Charlevoix, that some of the savages of North America will, by no means, be prevailed upon to strike, and hardly even to defend themselves against a woman; but should this be true, it is only a local custom; for we are assured almost by every traveller, that savages, in a variety of parts of the world, on the

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 { mercy.

WE have already observed, that power, when not influenced by humanity, is commonly made use of only to enslave. On this principle, we may assert, that the most general and extensive cause of the ill treatment of women, is the imbecillity of their constitutions, and the impossibility of asserting the rights of nature against a sex so much their superiors in strength. The next cause, is the insensibility of the men, or that savageness of disposition, which not only eradicates humanity, but prompts only to animal appetite, instead of the sentimental feelings of love; a cause which, more or less, prevails in almost every country, and particularly in those, where society and the various refinements thereon depending, are but little and imperfectly known. Men constantly accustomed to gain their subsistence by fishing and hunting, are trained up in the exercise of every cruelty against the brute creation; hence, in their wars, the same cruelty diffuses itself upon their antagonists and prisoners; and hence too, even the tender and inoffending fair sex are subjects upon which they exercise that ferocious and unfeeling temper, which, from their earliest infancy, has been nourished by their employments and their difficulties; and which neither religion, admonition, nor example, have ever conspired to restrain; nor the sympathetic feelings of the heart revolted against, as barbarous and inhuman. Whatever be the original difference in the feelings of the human heart, we know they are capable of being altered, and made better or worse by education and example; an incontestible proof of which arises from the behaviour of the genteel, and common

people of England, who must be nearly alike by nature; and yet by education, the employments of life, and the example of low company, the latter are often brutal and ferocious in their manners, while the former are distinguished for humanity, and the more exalted feelings of the soul.

A THIRD cause of the ill-treatment of the sex is, their general want of proper education and instruction. In savage life, without any engaging qualification of mind, and destitute of every ornament of body, except only a few things which render them more disagreeable, they have nothing but sex to engage the attention, and soften the rugged nature of the male. In countries a little more cultivated, as in Asia, though they lavish every ornament on their persons, their minds commonly present a blank; scarcely even here and there shaded with the outlines of knowledge and sensibility. In moderate climates, women acquire sense and experience, as their charms and beauty expand. In Asia, if they ever become sensible and intelligent, it is at an age when their short and fleeting beauty, which commonly begins to fade at eighteen, is all over. This is one of the strongest reasons why the women of the East are so little esteemed. In countries, where the manners are finished by the last touches of polish and refinement; the levities, expensive follies, and irrestrainable propensity to pleasure and admiration, frequently procure to the softer sex ill-treatment from ours; and force us even to despise and condemn the heart, which is lodged in the form we adore.

A FOURTH cause of the ill-treatment of women is, often, their taking too little care to make themselves agreeable. This is commonly the case in savage life, where, if nature has denied them
 charms,

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charms, they have no other way of attracting the heart; and where, if she has not denied them, the possessors have not learned to set a proper value upon them, nor to improve their power by correspondent qualifications of the mind. But this is not a case only to be met with in savage countries; in the most cultivated states of society, we often meet the careless flatterer, who disgusts us with her indelicacy; the conceited beauty, who, trusting to the favours she has received from nature, exacts from us the tribute she thinks due to them, with a petulant presumption, which frustrates all its own intentions; and the hapless wanderer from the paths of virtue, who, lost to honour and to shame, lays aside every thing pleasing in the manners of the best of her own sex, and adopts every thing disgusting in the worst of ours. To these characters we may add the unthinking wife; who, as soon as she has stepped over the threshold of matrimony, leaves behind her every delicacy, and every soft and engaging art, by which she attracted the lover.

IN polite countries, women reckon themselves ill-treated, if they are not beloved, accosted with respect, and even their wishes prevented by all the nameless little offices of good-breeding: accustomed to be constantly approached, with an air of submission that borders on adoration, to be constantly flattered, on account of their beauty and accomplishments, and wanting sagacity to distinguish mere gallantry from the real sentiments of the heart, they at last become pert and assuming, and often rude and ill-natured to such as they think do not offer a sufficient quantity of the incense of praise at the shrine of their beauty: having arrived this length, they soon become objects of contempt, and sometimes of ill-treatment. No class of females are so apt to fall into this tract

tract as those called beauties; who, though their company is eagerly coveted at every place of public amusement, are not so eagerly selected to retire with into that private scene of domestic life, where the mask must be laid aside, and the train of flatterers discarded.

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THE power of appropriating entirely to ourselves what we love and esteem, is so strongly rooted in our nature, that it has given birth to jealousy, one of the strongest passions that convulse the soul; and from this jealousy arises another fruitful source of the ill-treatment of women; it is the cause that has, time immemorial, shut them up in the gloom of perpetual imprisonment in the East, and debarred them from every joy that can flow from friendship, and from society. It is the cause which, in Hindostan, and more particularly in Persia, has subjected them not only to the chastisement of an enraged husband, but even to death itself, for an offence no greater than looking at a stranger. But we turn from such scenes of horror, to view the other side of the picture.

THE general causes of the proper treatment of women are simple, and may be all comprehended in the education of the one sex, and the behaviour of the other. It is want of education and instruction, that makes the savage; and it is the proper application of them, that form the man of society and the gentleman. A man brought up in any of the polite countries of Europe, is, from his earliest infancy, taught to do a thousand good offices to the fair sex; to honour and indulge them; and, as he grows up, to provide for, and defend them: hence every kindness, and every duty he can perform to them, are so imperceptibly interwoven with his nature, that he takes them for nature itself: but lest this

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attachment of education should not be strong enough to form a kind of balance of power between the two sexes, the Author of nature has wisely provided, that, at a certain age, love should spring up to lend its assistance, and add a motive still more powerful, than even custom and education, to induce us to do the fair sex every kind and indulgent office, which the delicacy of their situation, and the weakness of their nature, may stand in need of. But we must here carefully distinguish between that love, which, in civil life, is a mixture of animal appetite and sentimental feeling; and that which, in savage life, is animal appetite only. The last, though it may prompt men, when immediately under its impulse, to be fawning and complaisant, must be but short and inconstant in its operations; and, consequently, unable to restrain the common rudeness and oppression of the men, or raise the women to any degree of consequence and dignity. The first, more steady and uniform, inspires with an unremitting attention to do good offices, to protect, and screen from oppression the weakness which savages despise; with a generosity of sentiment, which does honour to politeness and to humanity. Nor are the fair regarded and defended only by such individuals as are connected with them by love, friendship, and other motives of passion and interest, but by the generality of men in civil life, from sentiments of gallantry; and by every wise legislature, which, in proportion to the weakness of that sex, exerts itself the more strenuously to protect their persons and interest.

SUCH, and many more, are the happy effects which the fair sex experience from education and from love; but in the individuals, with whom they are more nearly connected, good sense, and humanity of temper, are likewise necessary, in order to establish their security

security from ill-usage. There are in domestic life, a thousand little incidents where sentiments will unavoidably jar; but should even this happen so frequently, as to interrupt all peace, and be productive of a constant acrimony of temper, a man of sense, when connected with a woman whom he cannot love in his heart, will never degrade himself so as to use her ill; and will be sorry that he is obliged to pity, where he would wish to love.

THAT propriety of female behaviour, which inclines the men to favour, and treat the sex with the greatest indulgence, which the manners and customs of the country they reside in will admit of, is of various kinds, and would be tedious to run over. In savage countries, it consists mostly in performing the tasks of labour assigned them; in yielding the most abject submission to their husbands; and taking proper care of the children they have by them. In the East, it consists in resigning themselves with a seeming alacrity to confinement; being perfectly skilled in all the arts of pleasing, and avoiding, with the utmost circumspection, every cause of jealousy. In Europe it is more unlimited; it consists in good-nature, sensibility, delicacy, chastity, the domestic virtues, and a thousand other qualities; which, when joined to a competent share of beauty and female softness, are almost sufficient to sooth the most rugged nature, and change the cruellest temper into gentleness and humanity.

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Of the Character and Conduct of Women.

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AS the circle of female action is commonly more narrow and circumscribed than that of the other sex, so their good or bad character is also, for the most part, comprised under fewer virtues and vices: and in the East, where they are by confinement totally excluded from action and observation, we may say with Pope, That they have hardly any character at all.

AT the head of the qualities, which make up the good or bad character of each sex, there is generally placed some cardinal virtue, or vice; which is set, as it were, in the fore-ground; and to which all the rest of the figures in the groupe are subordinate. Thus what is the most highly estimated in the men, is courage and sensibility; and what gives the highest lustre and polish to the women, is modesty, and that soft and gentle temper, which is ever ready to soothe affliction, and to pity distress. As these two virtues form the great outlines of the character of the fair sex, a large portion of what we have to say on the present subject, will necessarily be employed in inquiring, how far they have followed the paths that lead to them, or deviated into those that lead to their opposite vices, from the earliest ages of antiquity to the present time.

FROM

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X.Unchastity an
early vice in
the world.

FROM the very beginning almost of time, as we may learn from some hints thrown out by Moses, and conjecture from the rude and uncultivated state of society, we have no great reason to believe, that modesty and chastity were among the favourite virtues. The reasons assigned for the destruction of the world by the deluge; those assigned for the posterior destruction of Sodom; and the conduct of Lot's daughters, are all too evident proofs of our assertion. Proceeding forward to the patriarchal ages, the scene is but little altered; for we there find, that when Abraham had gone down into Egypt to avoid a famine, he had such an opinion of the dissoluteness of the people of that country, that he was afraid they would murder him, in order to get possession of his wife; and to avoid that danger, agreed with her to say, that she was his sister: a falsity and meanness, which he again repeated, when he afterwards journied with her in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines; a meanness, which plainly points out, that he would rather have suffered her tamely to have been debauched, by the people of any country into which he went, than run any risk on her account. This pusillanimous example was likewise copied by his son Isaac, when he went with Rebecca, his wife, into the same country of Gerar; and the speech of Abimelech to him, on finding that he had deceived him, plainly points out the ideas they then entertained of debauchery; "one of the people" might lightly have lain with her."

THE severe revenge, however, taken on the Sechemites, for the rape of Jacob's daughter, seems to insinuate, that the men paid no little regard to the chastity of their women; at least to those that were of her rank and condition; though the answer these avengers made to their father Jacob, when he reproved them

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for their cruel perfidy, plainly shews us, that public prostitution was in that simple and early period far from being unknown. “Should he deal with our sister (said they), as with an harlot?” And we are sorry to observe, from the relation of the adventure of Judah, with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who had personated a harlot, in order to force him to procure her a second husband, that, in his days, that profession seems neither to have been uncommon, nor attended with any great degree of infamy. In periods so exceedingly remote as these we are now delineating, the general conduct of the Hebrew women, with regard to chastity, seems extremely uncertain. We may, however, with great propriety lay it down as a rule, that the virtues and vices of the two sexes always keep nearly an equal pace with each other; and as we find the patriarchs themselves no way famous for continence, we cannot reasonably expect that their women were distinguished by this virtue: a conjecture, which is but too well confirmed by the ancient history of the Jewish nation; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had all of them several concubines as well as wives. David rioted in concubinage, and even in adultery; nor seems to have been checked in either, till he also became a murderer. Solomon set no bounds to his voluptuous appetite; and, from every neighbouring nation, selected a numerous train of women; among whom he spent a great part of his time in lewdness and debauchery.

Not remarkable for humanity.

If the women, in the times we are speaking of, were not remarkable for chastity, we have scarcely any better reason to think that they were more conspicuous for the sympathetic tenderness of the sex. Sarah, in a cruel manner, turned out the concubine and child of her husband, almost without provision, and in a desert country, where they had both nearly perished of hunger; nor
was

was she instigated by jealousy to the barbarous deed; it was the common custom to have concubines, and she herself had given Hagar to her husband. Jael, in cool blood, drove a nail into the temple of Sisera, to whom she had promised protection, and perfidiously slew him as he lay asleep in her tent. Delilah, a Philistine, who was married to Samson, treacherously betrayed the husband of her bosom to her countrymen. But not to draw the character of a people from single instances, it was customary among the nations which surrounded the Israelites, in these times, to offer human victims to their idols; a custom which they also sometimes imitated, when the parents of both sexes attended, while their children passed through the fire to Moloch. These, and several other instances we could give, but too plainly shew that mankind in general were then immersed in rudeness and cruelty, vices from which even the softer sex were not in the least exempted.

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THE character of some of the other nations, in the remote periods we are now considering, was, perhaps, still less famous for purity of female manners than that of the Hebrews. In Egypt, the story of Potiphar's wife presents us with an almost unparalleled instance of female effrontery; but as it would be unjust to stigmatize a whole nation, from the impudence and lewdness of one woman, let us look into their history; a history which will but too well convince us that the proofs of female manners being debauched in Egypt, are far from being confined to this single instance.

PERON, successor to Sesostris, the first king of Egypt, having become blind, was told by an oracle, that he should recover if he washed his eyes with the urine of a woman who had never known

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known any man besides her own husband; he began by making trial of that of his own wife, and afterwards of that of many other women, to no purpose, and was at last happily restored to sight by the urine of an obscure woman; upon which he bestowed upon her great rewards, and ordered, that all those who had given him such proof of their incontinence should be put to death. Chemmis, another of their kings, who is said to have erected the largest Egyptian pyramid, being at a loss how to procure materials for carrying on so extraordinary a work, at last, considering how much the people were given to debauchery, ordered his own daughter to become a prostitute, and to demand that each of her paramours should bring a large stone to be employed in the building carried on by her father; these stones she collected in such numbers, that they were found not only sufficient to finish the great pyramid already begun, but with the remainder she erected a small one to her own memory. Though both these stories carry along with them the most evident marks of fable; yet, as fable was so frequently made use of in the East, to convey instruction or reproof, they might nevertheless be highly characteristic of the manners of the times: but, besides, if we may form any judgment of the character of a nation from its customs and religious ceremonies, which, if we may be allowed the expression, are the truest pictures of its heart, they will teach us to entertain but a low opinion of the decency and decorum of the ancient Egyptian women.

THEY had a custom in Egypt of going several times every year to celebrate a festival of Diana at Bubaste; as they commonly went by water, the boats were promiscuously crowded with men and women, and when they passed near any town or village, they
stopped,

stopped, in order to give an opportunity to the women on board to make a kind of trial of skill with these on shore, in the most obscene language and gesticulations; when at last, after a variety of these indecent skirmishes, they arrived at the place of their destination, they celebrated the festival in honour of their goddesses, by rites which would have dishonoured the vilest of the race of mortality, by drinking, rioting, and committing such debaucheries that ancient authors have been ashamed fully to describe them. Among other nations we find but too many examples of men endeavouring to debauch their women when living; the Egyptians afford us the only one we meet with, where they sacrilegiously defiled themselves with them when dead. It was a custom in this country, immediately after death, to deliver the body to the embalmers, to be by them prepared for burial; but young women of great beauty were at last, contrary to this custom, obliged to be kept till the symptoms of putrefaction began to appear, lest the embalmers, as had sometimes happened, should abuse their dead bodies.

NOTWITHSTANDING of this public licentiousness, the laws of Egypt seem not to have been in the fault, but the constitutions of the people appear to have been warm and libidinous beyond measure; nor were the civil laws only well calculated for the preservation of chastity, and securing the weaker sex from every insult upon their honour, but those of religion also conspired to assist them. The Egyptians seem to have been the first among the ancients who paid a proper respect to the temples of their gods; the neighbouring nations polluted them with every species of lust and intemperance; the Egyptians hallowing them, ordained that men should religiously abstain from women within
their

C H A P. X.  their sacred walls, and that ablutions, similar to those instituted by Moses, should be used after the commerce between the sexes.

WE have already observed that tenderness for their own offspring is one of the most powerful feelings of the female heart; but that, powerful as it is, a variety of causes have often weakened, and sometimes totally obliterated it. To these already taken notice of we shall now add, that this has in Egypt been done by superstition, in Greece and Rome, by a romantic patriotism; the Egyptian women rejoiced when their children were devoured by their sacred crocodiles; the Greeks and Romans, when they were slain in the wars, undertaken to defend or enlarge their country: would we were able to say, that in modern times maternal tenderness did not often cease to shew itself on account of causes more frivolous and not less culpable. The religious character of the Egyptian women can only be drawn from that of their men; those were superstitious beyond almost a possibility of belief, they worshipped animals of every kind, and even paid an extravagant degree of adoration to the vilest of reptiles and insects; and what is not a little extraordinary, the animal that was adored and worshipped in one district, was frequently held in the utmost abomination in another. As women have been in all countries less apt to examine and reason upon matters, than men, they have ever been more credulous and superstitious; we may therefore suppose that every whimsical extravagance in the Egyptian religion had the women in general as its votaries.

Motives to induce good behaviour in Egypt.

IN no country was there ever such powerful motives devised to oblige people to preserve an untainted character as in Egypt; it is well known to our learned readers how much the honours

of

of sepulture were valued among the ancients, and the horrid ideas they annexed to the situation of that soul whose body lay unburied. The Egyptian legislature, availing itself of this universal prejudice, ordained, That no person should obtain burial till a rigorous examination had passed into his conduct when living; for this purpose the corpse was ordered to be carried into an island in the lake Moeris, where the people sat as judges upon it, and decreed, or denied it burial, according as the character came out good or bad. The boatman who was first employed in carrying dead bodies over to this solemn trial, being named Charon, has given origin to the poetical fable of Charon ferrying souls over the Styx, or from this world to the next. From the few scattered hints only which we have remaining of ancient Egypt, we can with little certainty say any more of their character or conduct; so different are the accounts we meet with concerning them, some affirming that the women did all the business without doors, while the men confined themselves within; others asserting, that the men confined all their women from jealousy, and never allowed them the use of shoes, that they might not be able to walk abroad; but these accounts may relate to different periods, or to different districts of the same country.

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THAT modesty and chastity, which we now esteem as the chief ornament of the female character, does not appear in times of remote antiquity to have been much regarded by either sex. At Babylon, the capital of the Assyrian empire, it was so little valued, that a law of the country even obliged every woman once in her life to depart from it. This abominable law, which, it is said, was promulgated by an oracle, ordained, That every woman should once in her life repair to the temple of Venus;

Prostitution
established by
a law at Ba-
bylon.

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that on her arrival there, her head should be crowned with flowers, and in that attire she should wait till some stranger performed with her the rites sacred to the goddesses of debauchery.

THIS temple was constructed with a great many winding galleries, appropriated to the reception of the women, and the strangers who, allured by debauchery, never failed to assemble there in great numbers, being allowed to chuse any woman they thought proper from among those who came there in obedience to the law. When the stranger accosted the object of his choice, he was obliged to present her with some pieces of money, nor was she at liberty to refuse either these, or the request of the stranger who offered them, whatever was the value of the money, or however mean or disagreeable the donor. These preliminaries being settled, they retired together to fulfil the law, after which the woman returned and offered to the goddesses the sacrifice prescribed by custom, and then was at liberty to return home. Nor was this custom entirely confined to the Babylonians; in the island of Cyprus they sent young women at stated times to the sea-shore, where they prostituted themselves as a tribute to Venus, that they might be chaste the rest of their lives. In some other countries, a certain number only were doomed to prostitution, as it is supposed, by way of a bribe, to induce the goddesses of debauchery to save the rest.

WHEN a woman had once entered the temple of Venus, she was not allowed to depart from it till she had fulfilled the law; and it frequently happened that those to whom nature had been less indulgent than to others, remained there a long time before
any

any person offered to perform with them the condition of their release. A custom, we think, sometimes alluded to in scripture, and expressly delineated in the book of Baruch: "The women also, with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume; but, if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken." Though this infamous law was at first strictly observed by all the women of Babylon, yet it would seem that, in length of time, they grew ashamed of, and in many cases dispensed with it; for we are informed that women of the superior ranks of life, who were not willing literally to fulfil the law, were allowed a kind of evasion; they were carried in litters to the gates of the temple, where, having dismissed all their attendants, they entered alone, presented themselves before the statue of the goddesses, and returned home. Possibly this was done by the assistance of a bribe, to those who had the care of the temple.

It has been alleged by some of these authors, who can find nothing in antiquity but virtue and excellence, that the oracle which instituted this law, considering Venus as a goddess who delighted in debauchery, not only meant to satisfy her by this public act of prostitution, but also to induce her to preserve, during the rest of their lives, the innocence of such women as had thus shewn that they were her votaries, by voluntarily dedicating themselves for once to her service; as also to raise in the minds of their women a detestation of unchastity, by the shame they must have suffered in exposing themselves to so public a prostitution. But whatever may be said in its justification, a law of this kind is in its nature indefensible, and, from whatever motive

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this law.

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it proceeded, must have been but ill calculated to promote virtue and morality; as it is obvious, even almost to the slightest observer, that such is the disposition of human nature, that the barrier, which separates between vice and virtue, once overleaped, it from that moment loses half its restrictive power, and in a little time becomes no barrier at all. It appears, therefore, that no great degree of credit is due to Herodotus, when he affirms that the Babylonish women having once fulfilled the obligation imposed upon them by this law, could never after be prevailed upon to deviate from modesty and virtue; nor to Ælian, who says, that the Lydians and inhabitants of the isle of Cyprus, who had similar laws, which these last carried even farther than the Babylonians, obliging every woman to abstain from marriage till she had gained a fortune suitable to her rank by prostitution, were ever after inflexibly virtuous.

SUCH assertions are too gross to be swallowed by an impartial observer of human nature; and, besides, are every where falsified by the conduct of the Babylonish women. The sacred writings of the prophets are almost in every page filled with reproaches against them for their lewdness and debauchery; but not to rest the validity of what we have said entirely on that foundation, the same Herodotus, who had told us of the inviolable chastity of the Babylonian women, informs us a little after, that when their city was taken by Cyrus, such was the licentiousness of the place, that fathers, without any scruple, prostituted their own daughters for hire. And Quintus Curtius not only confirms the same thing, but adds, that even husbands were not ashamed on that occasion to deliver their wives to strangers for money; actions which are in no respect consonant to the virtuous character pretended by
some

some to be derived from the vicious source of public prostitution. Were it necessary to multiply proofs of the licentious character of the Babylonian women, we could instance the prodigious number of courtezans, which were among them, whose profession did not render them contemptible in the public opinion, as it always does where virtue and modesty prevail. The drunkenness of the sex, who used frequently to attend the convivial meetings of the men, where, themselves not less convivial, they often ate, drank, and made merry, till by degrees divesting themselves of all modesty, they sometimes finished the debauch in the original state of mother Eve; nor was this the practice of the meanest of the sex only, nor of the most lewd and abandoned, it was that of women of all ranks and conditions; but we cannot wonder at finding a people lewd and debauched, when the ceremonies of their religion, and the divinities they worshipped, taught them the hopeful lesson.

WHEN error and absurdity have the sanction of religion to support them, our own times afford us too many proofs of what mischiefs they may be productive; and were we not daily convinced of this by experience, we would hardly be able to give credit to what has been now related of the Babylonians. But they were not the only people of antiquity led astray in this manner; there scarcely existed one single religion, in the times we are speaking of, the rites of which were not solemnized either with cruelty or debauchery, or both; and scarcely was there one god or goddess adored, who was not famous for lust and intrigue; such, in a notorious degree, was Jupiter, the greatest of their deities, such was Vulcan, such was Venus, and such the great Syrian goddess, whose temples were crowded with the votaries
of

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of lust, who disseminated that vice among the people, greatly to the corruption of the manners of both sexes. But rites of cruelty and debauchery were naturally enough suggested as proper modes of worshipping divinities, who delighted in uncleanness and in blood.

Of the Massagetæ and Lydians.

THIS corruption of manners reigned but too universally among the ancients. The Massagetæ, a people of Scythia, being confined to one wife, while the nations around them were indulged with the liberty of polygamy and concubinage; in order to put themselves in some degree on a footing with their neighbours, introduced a kind of community of wives, and a man who had an inclination to the wife of his friend, only carried her into his waggon or hut, and hung up a quiver while she was there, as a sign, that they might not be interrupted. In this manner were decency and the most sacred ties of matrimony publicly violated; but what decency, what regard to the most solemn institutions can we expect in a people who were so rude and barbarous, that when any of their relations became old, they met together, and along with some cattle set apart for the purpose, sacrificed them to their gods; then having boiled together the flesh of the human and the more ignoble victims, they devoured it as a most delicious repast? The Lydians were still more debauched than the Massagetæ. In the reign of Jardanes, so ungovernable was their lust, that Omphale, the king's only daughter, could scarcely, even within the walls of the royal palace, find shelter from the licentious multitude. Omphale at length succeeding to the throne of her father, punished with the utmost severity such as had formerly abused her; on the women, whom it appears she considered as not less criminal than the men, she revenged herself

in a singular manner; she ordered, that, over all her kingdom, they should be shut up with their slaves.

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THE Scythians, whose character is far from being the most abandoned of the ancients, seem not to have had much cause to boast of the chastity and fidelity of their women; the greatest part of their men having on some occasion made an expedition into Asia, were detained there much beyond their expectation, when their wives, either impatient of their long absence, or despairing of their return, took their servants and slaves, and invested them in all the possessions and privileges of their absent husbands. These, some time after hearing that their masters were about to return, fortified and intrenched themselves, in order to hinder them from entering into their own country, and claiming their wives and possessions. The Scythians having advanced to their slaves, several skirmishes were fought between them, with doubtful success, when one of their leaders advised his countrymen not to fight again with their own slaves as with equals, nor to attack them with warlike weapons, which were signs of freedom, but with such whips and scourges as they had formerly been accustomed to make them feel. This advice being put in execution, the whips recalled their ideas of slavery, and all the pusillanimity naturally attending it; they threw down their arms and fled in confusion, many of them were taken and put to death, and not a few of the unfaithful wives destroyed themselves, to avoid the resentment of their injured husbands. Though this story has been by different authors varied in several of its circumstances, yet as so many have agreed in relating it, we have not the least doubt of its authenticity, especially as we are assured that the Novogorodians, whose city stands in Sarmatian Scythia, had

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had formerly a coin stamped in memory of it, with a man on horseback shaking a whip in his hand; and it is supposed that the ancient custom in Russia, which is now happily forgot, of the bride presenting the bridegroom on the nuptial night with a whip, originated from this story of the Scythian wives.

Persian women, their character.

WE have already related the manner in which the Babylonish women were admitted to the riotous feasting of the men; a custom which, only with a few more restrictions, took place also in Media and Persia, as appears from the story of Amintas, king of Macedon, already also related; a story which incontestibly proves that, in the times we are considering, the Persian women were of as easy virtue as the men could wish them; but the voluptuous and libidinous character of that court cannot be better delineated, nor painted in stronger colours, than we find it in the book of Esther, where we have a relation of Ahasuerus, one of their monarchs, carrying his refinements in debauchery to such a length as we have no instance of any where else on record.

‘ NOW when every maiden’s turn was come to go in unto king
‘ Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to
‘ the manner of the women, for so were the days of their purification accomplished; viz. six months with oil of myrrh, and six
‘ months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women.

‘ THEN thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she
‘ desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the
‘ women into the king’s house.

‘ IN

‘ IN the evening she went out, and on the morrow she returned
 ‘ into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaafgaz,
 ‘ the king’s chamberlain, which kept the concubines ; she came in
 ‘ unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and
 ‘ that she were called by name.’

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SUCH was the expence, and such the refinement necessary to fit women for the arms of the Persian monarch ; and such was the perpetual imprisonment and continence to which he condemned the hapless wretches, who, with all this parade of voluptuousness, were destined for one night only to the hateful pre-eminence of his bed ; in short, it was in the court of Persia, where we may properly say, that lawless love reigned triumphant, where mothers mixed in incestuous commerce with their sons, daughters with their fathers, and sisters with their brothers. Artaxerxes Memnon, having fallen in love with his own daughter Atossa, and himself entertaining some scruples, his passion was fomented, and these scruples dissipated by his mother : “ Are not you, said she, set by the gods over the Persians, as the only rule of what is becoming or unbecoming, virtuous or vicious ? ” A speech, which strongly indicates that daring spirit of woman, which when urged by any of the more violent passions, has often overleaped every barrier, and born down every difficulty, from which male nature has shrunk back with trembling and reluctance. Another of the Persian kings, entertaining some scruples on an occasion of a similar nature, convened the magi to give him their opinion, “ We can find no law, said they, in Persia, to authorize a man to marry his own daughter, but our laws authorize a king to do whatever he pleases.”

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Instances of
the effect of
jealousy.

IN countries where there is, as in Persia, an unlimited liberty of polygamy and concubinage, jealousy in the fair sex is a passion much weakened by the variety of objects that divide it, and the restraint laid on it by the despotism of the men; we should not therefore expect to find it operating very strongly. But even here, where the king is the severest despot of the country, and women only the tools of his lust, and slaves of his power, we meet with instances of this passion exerting itself in the most cruel manner. Xemes, among many other amours, had conceived a passion for the wife of his brother Masistus, which he prosecuted for a long time by promises and threatenings, without any success; when, quite tired with so many fruitless efforts, he at last changed his attack from the mother to her daughter, who, with much less opposition, yielded herself to his wishes. Amestris, his queen, having discovered the amour, and imagining that the daughter only acted by the direction of her mother, from that moment resolved on the severest revenge. By an ancient custom in Persia, the queen had a right, on the king's birth-day, to demand of him any favour that she thought proper; Amestris asked that the wife of Masistus should be delivered into her hands, whom she had no sooner received than she ordered her breasts, nose, tongue, and lips to be cut off, and thrown to the dogs, and that she should be detained to see her own flesh devoured by them.

Instances of
modesty.

AMONG a people so abandoned, and so much the slaves of cruelty and lust, a people who made every thing subservient to voluptuousness and debauchery, it is natural to think that modesty among the fair sex could scarcely have any existence. This, however, was not universally the case; a few women, even in Persia, were far from being destitute of that modesty and sensibility

which are the ornament of their sex, and the delight of ours. Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, and wife of Darius, being attacked with a cancer in her breast, and thinking it inconsistent with the modesty of her sex to discover the diseased part, suffered in silence till the pain became intolerable, when, after many struggles in her own mind, she at last prevailed on herself to shew it to Democedes, her physician. We might mention more particular instances of the modesty of the Persian women, but we pass over them, to take notice of an anecdote of a lady in a neighbouring kingdom, which shews, that, in the times under review, there were some women susceptible of sentiment and feeling; things which are not frequently met with in the East. Tygranes and his new-married wife being taken prisoners by Cyrus, Tygranes offered a great ransom for her liberty; Cyrus generously released them both without any reward; as soon as they were alone, the happy couple, naturally falling into a discourse concerning their benefactor; What do you think, said Tygranes, of his aspect and deportment? I did not observe either, answered the lady. Upon what then did you fix your eyes, said Tygranes? Upon the man, returned she, who generously offered so great a ransom for my liberty.

So little was modesty and chastity cultivated among the ancients, that many nations seem to have had no idea of either. The Aushi, a people of Lybia, cohabited so promiscuously with their women, that the whole of the children of the state were considered as a community till they were able to walk alone, when, being brought by their mothers into a public assembly of the people, the man to whom a child first spoke was obliged to acknowledge himself its father. The wives of the Eastrians were, through a

Depravity of
manners al-
most univer-
sal.

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long series of years, famed for licentiousness; and custom had given such a sanction to their crimes, that the husbands had not only lost all power of restraining them, but even durst hardly venture to complain of their infidelity. In Cyprus, an island sacred to Venus, the very rites of their religion were all mingled with debauchery and prostitution. And the Lydians, and many other nations, publicly prostituted their daughters, and other female relations, for hire. But to multiply instances of the depravity of ancient manners would be endless; mankind, even when bridled by the strongest penal laws, and restricted in their passions by the sacred voice of religion, are but too often, in the pursuit of unlawful pleasures, apt to disregard both; what then must they have been before society, before laws existed, and when religion lent its sanction to encourage the vices and deprave the heart? In these times we have the greatest reason to believe that debauchery reigned with but little controul over two-thirds of the habitable globe.

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The same Subject continued.

AS the history of the nations we have hitherto been considering is so enveloped in those clouds of darkness which obscure antiquity, we shall leave it, to make some observations on the character and conduct of the women of Greece.

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OF this so much distinguished, so much admired people, who, for many ages, shone so illustrious in arts and arms, and whose panegyric has been founded so loud in ancient and in modern history; we sincerely wish that a regard for truth did not oblige us to give so indifferent a character. But when we have said that they shone in arts and arms, we have completed their eulogium. When we consider them as patriots, they appear distinguishable; when we consider them as men, and as citizens of the world, they almost excite our horror. Other nations made laws to make nature better, and to enforce humanity. Those of some of the Grecian states were calculated to eradicate nature and humanity from the human heart. In short, in whatever view we contemplate this people, we find them remarkable only for an unnatural austerity of manners, for the most inflexible severity, and a life hardly softened by one agreeable shade in the whole picture.

General idea
of the Greeks.

THE

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THE character we have hitherto drawn of the fair sex is calculated to excite but few of these pleasing emotions; we would wish to warm our bosoms whenever we contemplate objects so dear to us, but we write the history of Women, not their panegyric; truth, therefore, still obliges us to exhibit to view characters hardly more amiable or engaging than those we have already drawn.

IN a preceding chapter we have observed that, during the whole of what are called the heroic ages, the history of Greece is nothing but a compound of the most absurd fable; from that fable it however appears, that their gods and men employed much of their time and ingenuity in seducing, stealing, and forcibly debauching their young women, circumstances which naturally suggest an idea that those women who could not be obtained by any other means must have been virtuous; nor indeed does it appear that they were then much less so than in those succeeding periods, when the Greeks flourished in all their splendour, and were reckoned a highly polished people; nay, they were, perhaps, more so, for infant colonies and kingdoms commonly display more virtue than those already arrived at maturity; the reason is plain, the first have not yet attained riches, the sources of idleness and debauchery, the last have attained them, and are corrupted. But the Greeks, even in the infancy of their existence as a people, seem to have been remarkably vicious, for we hardly meet with any thing in their early history but murders, rapes, and usurpations; witness the transactions of the kingdom of Mycene, of Pelops, and his descendants. The rapes of Io, Proserpine, Helena, &c. all of which stain the character of their gods and men with the foulest infamy; and as it has never happened

pened in any nation that the one sex has been exceedingly vicious, and the other not participated of its crimes, we may conclude that the Greek women were, in the heroic ages, far from being famous for any of the moral virtues. The greatest part of the Grecian princes who assembled at the siege of Troy, were guilty of many of the most enormous crimes, while their wives, not less flagitious, murdered almost the whole of them after their return; a thing nearly incredible, when we consider that in those times custom had condemned the wife who had lost a husband to perpetual widowhood; but even custom, though often more regarded than all the laws of heaven and earth, must in time yield to a general corruption of manners.

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BUT to proceed to times of which we are better informed. The women of other nations were indecent through the strength of their ungovernable passions; some of the Greek women were obliged to be indecent by law. In Sparta, what virtue, what decorum can we expect, when even the strongest temptations to vice had the public sanction of the legislature? In the heroic ages, while ignorance and brutality of manners prevailed, we are not much surprised to find the women conducting the men to the baths, undressing them, and attending to dress and rub them when they came out; but in Sparta, famed for its salutary laws, and when Greece was in its most polished condition, we are amazed to find that both sexes resorted to, and bathed together in the public baths. And this amazement is still heightened, when we are assured that here also plays were acted by order of the legislator, where young people of both sexes were obliged to fight, and to dance naked on the stage, that the men, according to his ideas, might be thereby excited to matrimony. What

Laws in
Greece fa-
vourable to
debauchery of
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were

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were the consequences of the indecencies we have now mentioned? The intention of Lycurgus, if he really had any such intention, was but little attended to, and it is agreed on all hands, that both sexes went to those plays only for the sake of debauchery; and further, that, disgusted by this shameless exposure, the men paid less regard to the women, and the women became less virtuous, and at last grew dissolute to such a degree as to be thereby distinguished from all the other women of Greece. Euripides, and some others of the Greek authors, bestow upon them epithets which decency will not allow us to translate, nor were these epithets the overflowings of the gall of satyric poets and violent declaimers only, but the cool and considerate reflections of the impartial historian; but we would not be understood as altogether confining dissoluteness and debauchery to the women of Sparta, those of many of the other states were little inferior to them. In Thracia and Bœotia they every third year held a festival in memory of the expedition of Bacchus into India, at which both married women and virgins, with javelins in their hands and dishevelled hair, ran about like furies bellowing the praises of the god, and committing every disorder suggested by madness and folly.

Deference
shewn to
courtezans.

WHEREVER public prostitution becomes so fashionable that it is attended with no disgrace in the opinion of the male, and with exceedingly little in that of the female sex, there, we may assure ourselves, the morals of the women are highly contaminated; a circumstance of which Athens afforded the most glaring proof. In that city courtezans were not only kept in a public manner by most of the young men of fashion, but greatly countenanced, and even publicly visited by Solon their lawgiver, who applauded such

such young men as were found in the stews, because their going to these places rendered them less apt to attempt the virtue of modest women. But Athenian courtezans were not only visited by their great lawgiver, but also by the celebrated Socrates, and most of their other philosophers, who, not content with going frequently to see them themselves, even sometimes carried their wives and daughters along with them; a circumstance of which we do not recollect to have heard in any other country, and which could not but tend to give these wives a mean opinion of virtue, when they saw the preference that was given to vice; and when such of their own sex as thus publicly deviated from the paths of chastity were so openly esteemed and regarded, it was natural for those of a different character to pay the less regard to that chastity, the practising of which gained them no superior privilege nor advantage.

THE whole history of ancient Greece presents us with courtezans enjoying uncommon reputation and honour; to account for this, we must lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our sex has a natural inclination to the company and conversation of the other. Now, in Greece, modest women were all so strictly confined, that none were allowed to see or converse with them but their nearest relations; and from this confinement it naturally followed, that they were uncultivated, and ignorant of learning, and of almost every thing that was transacting in the world; they were, therefore, but ill qualified to entertain or amuse the men with their conversation. The Grecians had a natural taste for the beautiful, a taste which was greatly improved by their statuaries and painters; but the beauties of their modest women were rendered invisible by veils, and unengaging by awkwardness. The very reverse was the case with the courtezans, they improved

Causes of this
deference.

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their charms by every art, shewed them unveiled in every public place, and all had access to their company and to their houses. Not ignorant of the disadvantages that other women laboured under, they availed themselves of, and improved, their own more happy situation; they dedicated a great part of their time to the arts and sciences, to the knowledge of public affairs, to speaking with elegance and propriety, and, above all, to the arts of pleasing, which, whenever properly managed by women of beauty, have an ascendancy over us that they themselves seem but half acquainted with. Hence it is not difficult to see how the Grecian prostitutes crept into such consequence; they had art and nature on their side, and modest women being all imprisoned, they had no rivals to contend with.

Present inhabitants of Greece like their ancestors.

THE present inhabitants of Greece seem to have pretty nearly copied the pattern of antiquity; unchastity, with them, and even the trade of prostitution, are considered but as very trifling affairs, which any woman may be guilty of without losing her character. A Greek girl will agree with a Frank for any limited time he pleases: the Subaschi will as easily grant them a licence to live together for that time; and should any one be caught with her, during the continuance of it, they would both be fined, and exhibited through the nearest city, mounted together on an ass. At Venice, the courtezans of the present time seem nearly on a footing with those of ancient Greece. By the strongest sumptuary laws, the Venetian nobility are restrained from spending their money almost on any thing but their mistresses; and while the modest women feel their inclinations curbed in almost every article of luxury and expence by these laws, the courtezans, either above or below their notice, evade them altogether.

As

As the female form is of a softer and more delicate nature than that of the male, so their minds are generally more finely attuned to the gentler feelings of tenderness and humanity; but the Grecian women, either by nature, or more probably by custom, were in this respect miserably deficient. At an annual festival, celebrated in honour of Diana, all the children of Sparta were whipt till the blood ran down on the altar of the goddesses. Under this cruel ceremony, which was inflicted, as they pretended, to accustom them to bear pain without murmuring, some, almost every year, expired. The inhuman barbarity was performed in the presence of the whole city; the fathers, and what our female readers will hardly credit, even the mothers, beholding their children bathed in blood, and ready to expire with pain, stood exhorting them to suffer the number of lashes assigned them, without a groan or a complaint. It may be alleged here, that women being spectators and encouragers of a cruel ceremony, is no proof of their want of proper feelings, but only an instance of the power of custom. A doctrine to which we cannot altogether assent, being persuaded, that there are many of the fair-sex, of a composition so humane and tender, that even custom could not reconcile them to barbarity; but allowing it to have that power, what folly were the men guilty of in instituting such a ceremony? they were robbing the women of every thing valuable in the female mind, and labouring to make them what they were not intended to be by nature.

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Grecian women destitute of the tenderness of their sex.

BUT this inhuman custom was not the only proof that the Greek women were divested of that female tenderness which we so much admire in the sex. There was in Greece a custom, if possible, still more barbarous; as soon as a boy was born at Sparta,

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he was visited by a deputation of the elders of each tribe; if he appeared to be of a weakly constitution, and not likely to become a stout and healthful member of their state, they judged him not to be worth the trouble of rearing; and therefore ordered him to be thrown into a quagmire, at the bottom of the Mountain Taygeta. This was valuing human beings, exactly as we would do an ox or an ass; and entirely setting aside all the moral turpitude of murder. It was only, however, practised at Sparta; and we should have hoped, that, even there, it was contrary to the inclination, and without the consent, of the women; were we not assured by a variety of authors, that the Spartan dames, in every circumstance, almost entirely governed their husbands. To the barbarous customs, now mentioned, we shall add only one more. To so weak and expiring a state was the paternal instinct of nature reduced among the Greeks, that they frequently, as we have already related, exposed such children as they were not able, or did not chuse, to maintain*. A barbarity which, more or less, prevailed in all the Grecian states; except at Thebes, a city, where, to the immortal honour of the inhabitants, it was so much abhorred, that, by their laws, it was capitally punished. We shall finish this subject, by observing, that the Spartan matrons received the news of their sons having been slain in battle, not only without any signs of grief, but even with an appearance of extravagant joy and satisfaction, which they took the most early opportunity of shewing in public. Those same women, however, who pretended to have imbibed so much heroism, that they were strangers to every fear, but such as arose on account of their country, when they saw Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra,

* Though the Greeks might expose infants, they could not sell a daughter, or a sister, unless she became a whore.

march-

marching his victorious army towards Sparta, testified by their behaviour, that they were subject to fears of another nature; and that all their joys and sorrows arose not solely from the prosperity or adversity of their country. They ran up and down the streets in terror and despair, filling the air with shrieks, and transfusing their own timidity into the men, caused more disorder than the approach of the victorious army.

WHEN we come to the history of the matrimonial compact, we shall see how the Grecian women behaved to their husbands; and shall at present sum up the rest of their character, by observing, that at Athens, even drunkenness appears to have been among the number of their vices; as is evident by a law of Solon, in which it is enacted, that no woman shall be attended by more than one servant when she goes abroad, unless when she is drunk. It would seem that the Athenian women also made use of the darkness of the night to screen them in their intrigues; for another law of Solon ordains, that no woman shall walk abroad at night, unless she intends to play the whore; and from several other ordinances of this legislator, it plainly appears, that to keep women within the bounds of that decorum proper to their sex, was a matter of no small difficulty; for, to the laws we have just now mentioned, he was obliged to add others, which shew that the sex were only to be governed by coercive measures. He ordained, that no woman should go out of the city with more provisions than could be purchased for an obolus, nor with a basket higher than a cubit; and if a woman went abroad at night, she was to be carried in a waggon, preceded by a flambeau: from all which it seems evident, that the design of Solon was to make the Athenian women decent and virtuous. If Lycurgus had the same in-

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the Greek
women.

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tention in the laws that he gave the Lacedæmonians, we cannot help thinking that he had but ill studied human nature ; for, as a learned author of the present age has observed, though nakedness of both sexes is no incentive to lust, and though the inhabitants of countries where no clothes are used, are not on this account less virtuous than their neighbours, where they are used, yet there may be modes of clothing which more powerfully excite the passions, than the most absolute nakedness. Of this kind, in our opinion, was the dress of Sparta. We shall have occasion afterward to describe it, and at present shall only observe, that it has been exclaimed against by a variety of the writers of antiquity.

Of the Ro-
 man women.

THOUGH such is the general character of the Greeks, we have happily no instance of a corruption of manners having spread itself over a whole nation, in such a manner as to leave nobody free from the contagion. In the midst of licentiousness and barbarity, at least in these periods, that were subsequent to the siege of Troy, the Grecian women afford us several instances of chastity, conjugal fidelity, and maternal affection. In the heroic ages, or those periods when their states were in their infancy, they appear to have been abandoned almost to every species of wickedness ; but when we turn to the Romans, we find the case quite otherwise. In the earlier periods of the Roman republic, before the wealth poured in from innumerable conquests had introduced luxury and dissipation, no women were more famous for their virtues, none more infamous afterward for their vices. The whole history of Rome, for several ages after its foundation, bears testimony to the tenderness, frugality, and chastity of her women. Of this nothing can be a stronger proof, than the long period that intervened between the foundation of the republic and the first divorce ; a period of five hun-

dred and twenty years, though the men had a power of divorcing their wives almost at pleasure. To this proof we could add a great variety of others, but shall only mention the story of the rape of Lucretia, which in the strongest manner demonstrates the value which the Roman women set upon the most unspotted chastity. Lucretia, being violated in secret, could not have found the smallest difficulty in concealing what had happened; and besides, should it have been discovered, the fraud and force made use of against her were sufficient to have quieted her conscience, and exculpated her to her husband and the public from every imputation of criminality: yet, so exalted were her ideas of chastity, that she was resolved not to give back to the arms of her husband, a body even involuntarily polluted, nor to survive the guiltless stain which her honour had suffered; but calling together her friends, in the presence of her husband, she revealed to them the secret of the rape that had been committed upon her; and while conjuring them to revenge her injured name, she stabbed herself in the breast with a dagger she had concealed under her garments for that purpose.

THE care taken by women to preserve their chastity will always be in proportion to the value set upon it by the men. When the women find that the men pay but little regard to this virtue, that they are as much caressed, and have as good a chance for a husband after they have trespassed the rules of it as before; the strongest obligation laid upon them to preserve it, is then taken off. In the earlier periods of the Roman republic, this seems to have been the cause of such inviolable chastity: the men had the highest regard for it; they not only avoided saying any thing in-

consistent:

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consistent with purity of manners, any thing that could give offence to modesty, in their serious hours ; but even in their gay and sportive humours, when the watch is apt to slip aside from the door of the lips, never transgressed the bounds of decency, nor indulged in frolic and dalliance, even with their own wives, before a third person : they slighted and despised the woman who had voluntarily yielded herself to an unlawful embrace ; nor did any thing hurt their honour so much, as to have a wife or a daughter violated ; and methods of the most extraordinary nature were often taken to prevent or revenge such insults.

HUSBANDS and fathers, valuing chastity more than life, several times killed their wives and daughters, when they had no other means of preventing them from being ravished ; and women themselves, fired by this example, not unfrequently sacrificed their lives to preserve their honour. Virgineus, when he had tried every method to save his hapless daughter Virginea from the tyrant Claudius, who, under pretence of claiming her for his slave, wanted only to have her in his own power, that he might debauch her ; having obtained leave to speak to her before she should be delivered to the tyrant by the judgment of the court, took her in his arms, and wiping the tears from her eyes, drew near to some butchers shops, which stood in the Forum, where causes were publicly tried, and where Virginea had just been adjudged the property of Claudius. There, snatching up a knife, and turning to his daughter, “ My dear child (said he), this is “ the only way left to save thy liberty and thy honour. Go, Vir- “ ginea ! go to thy ancestors whilst thou art yet free and unde- “ filed !” Thus saying, he plunged the fatal knife into her breast ;

and

and such was the regard of the Romans to chastity, that almost the whole of the people rose in arms, to revenge the injured father, and the murdered daughter.

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COULD any thing more forcibly demonstrate the manner in which the Romans exerted themselves to preserve the delicacy, as well as the honour of their women, it would be the following circumstances. Manlius, a patrician and senator of Rome, having inadvertently saluted his wife in the presence of his daughter, and being by the Censors accused of an indecency; the Senate, after solemnly considering the matter, struck him off the list of their order. Julius Cæsar, having heard some indecent reports of his wife, immediately divorced her, without enquiring whether she was guilty or innocent; and being asked the reason of so severe a treatment, “ I would not (answered he) have the wife of Cæsar even suspected.” When several of the Vestal virgins had been at one time corrupted, the Romans reared a temple to Venus Verticordia, or the turner of hearts; and worshipped her with such ceremonies, as they imagined would incline her to turn the hearts of the Roman women to that chastity which they were in danger of forsaking. When such were the private, such the public instances of the regard shewn to chastity by the men; when the women forfeited every thing that was dear and interesting to their sex; if they deviated from it, can we wonder, that the Roman ladies, while this was the case, were remarkable beyond any thing that history has handed down to us, for this most exalted of female virtues?

SUCH was the state of chastity in Rome, till the Romans extended their conquests into Asia; and returning, brought along
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with them the amazing wealth, as well as voluptuous manners, of the nations they had plundered ; when all the boasted patriotism of the one sex began to give way to the most shameful venality, and all the chastity of the other, to the force of the fashionable vices just introduced among them. This venality of the men was whetted by the now luxurious manner of living, and extravagant taste for pageantry and show, and gratified by getting into offices of the state, and plundering the provinces, or selling the interests of their country. Women too, not less fond of being publicly conspicuous, had no other method of acquiring money to become so, than prostitution. Such an innovation of manners altogether overturned every sober plan of frugal œconomy, and turned the ideas of both sexes entirely upon riches, and the parade of the public shews and diversions, which these enabled them to give and to attend. This immoderate desire of shews brought a low and shameless freedom into fashion, and women contended with each other, who should bribe highest to obtain the favours of a player. Debauchery reduced fertility ; but as fertility was not their wish, they learned to procure abortions, that their pleasures might suffer the less interruption ; at last, jaded even with these pleasures, which they had tried the most unnatural means to vary, their lewdness became too powerful to be restrained by law, and bore down every obstacle that opposed its course. The men, tinged with the licentious manners of Asia, and contaminated with every crime, now paid nearly the same respect to her who had forfeited her title to chastity, as to her who had not. Hence lewdness and debauchery, neither afraid of shame nor of punishment, became fashionable among every rank and condition of women, while chastity was considered only as an antiquated virtue.

COURTS

COURTS are but too frequently the seminaries of vice. This was evidently the case at Rome. The Empreſſes generally took the lead in lawleſs indulgence: the example of the great is commonly followed by the little: from the court, a ſcene of the moſt ſhameleſs libertinifm, hardly to be paralleled in hiſtory, diſſeminated itſelf all over Rome. Women danced naked on the ſtage, bathed promiſcuouſly with the men, and, with more than maſculine effrontery, committed every ſort of irregularity. By the unbounded licence thus given to unlawful pleaſures, matrimony became unfashionable, and was conſidered as a confinement and a burden, not conſiſtent with Roman freedom and independence. To theſe ideas alſo the conduct of the married women did not a little contribute, and raiſed in the huſbands ſuch a diſguſt at marriage, that even Metellus the Cenſor, who ought to have been the protector of that inſtitution, made the following ſpeech to the people againſt it: “ If it were poſſible for us to do without wives, “ we ſhould deliver ourſelves from this evil; but as nature has “ ordained, that we cannot live very happily with them, nor “ without them, we ought to have more regard to our own pre- “ ſervation, than to tranſient gratifications.” Rome is the only place that ever furniſhed an inſtance of a general conſpiracy among the married women to poiſon their huſbands.

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A VARIETY of laws were from time to time deviſed by the Romans to ſtop the progreſs of public prostitution. Among others it was ordained, that all courtezans ſhould take out a licence from the court of the Ædiles; which they ſhould renew once every year, and without which they ſhould not be allowed to carry on their trade; that their names, and the price of their favours, ſhould be wrote upon the doors of their houſes. Theſe, one would have

Laws of the
Romans to
re'rain this
licentiousneſs.

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imagined, were such conditions as no woman who had the least remaining spark of sensibility would have agreed to. But the torrent of vice was not to be stopped so easily : women, who were wives and daughters to Roman knights, were not ashamed to apply for such licences ; and the infection was even reaching higher. Vistilla, a lady of a Prætorian family, with an unparalleled effrontery appeared in public court before the Ædiles, and declaring herself a prostitute, demanded a licence to enable her to exercise her trade. Debauched as the Romans then were, under a prince so dissolute as Tiberius, their fears were alarmed ; and the senate enacted several laws to restrain at least women of rank from degrading themselves and families by a conduct so infamous : they ordained, that no woman whose father, grandfather, or husband, was a Roman knight, or of any higher quality, should be allowed to take upon her the trade of prostitution. The debauchery of the women was also the occasion of the Voconian law, which we have already mentioned : but when corruption had interwoven itself so dexterously into the manners and customs of the Romans, laws became too feeble to bring on a reformation. The emperor Titus prohibited all public stews : the prohibition was but little regarded. When Severus mounted the throne, he found on the roll of causes to be tried, no less than three thousand prosecutions for adultery : he had formed a scheme of reformation ; from that moment he abandoned it as impossible.

Religion of
the Romans
in some cases
a scene of pro-
fligacy.

BUT it was not the manners and customs of the Romans only, that were tinged with debauchery : that vice at last insinuated itself into their religious ceremonies also. Fond of imitating the Greeks, the Bacchanalian mysteries, which they celebrated, were at length introduced into Rome, and filled the city with a scene of
horror

horror and profligacy, as appears from Livy, hardly equalled in the annals of any country. “ An obscure Greek (says he) came from Etruria, but brought with him none of those arts which that most accomplished people have introduced, to improve our minds and persons; a little paltry priest and fortune-teller, not one that shocked the minds of the people, by publicly professing to make a gain and trade of some religious ceremonies which he openly taught, but he was the minister of secret rites; he had his mysteries, in which but few were at first initiated, but which were afterwards communicated to men as well as women, without distinction or restraint. To these rites an entertainment of the finest wines and most exquisite dainties was added, to entice the greater numbers to become members of the society.

“ WHEN drinking had deprived them of their senses, and when the night, with the mixed company of young and old, and of men and women, had put an end to all modesty, every sort of vice began at once to be practised, as every one found the means of those lusts at hand, to which he was by nature most addicted. Nor were these crimes confined to one species only, the promiscuous debauchery of men and women of rank and family; but from thence issued false witnesses, false seals, false oaths, and false deeds; and even poisons, and assassinations, so secret, that they could not sometimes find the bodies to bury them. Many crimes were perpetrated by fraud, many by force, which no person knew of; for amid such a scene of debauchery and slaughter, attended with the howlings of the people, and the noise of the trumpets and cymbals, it was impossible to hear the cries of those who were calling for assistance. At first, the extent of the city, and a willingness to endure an evil of this

“ sort,

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“ fort, made it pass unnoticed ; but Posthumus the Consul was at
“ last informed of it.

“ AT first their chapel was appropriated to women only, no
“ man being on any account admitted into it : there were three
“ days set apart in each year for initiation into the Bacchanalian
“ mysteries ; and the women, in their turn, were usually created
“ priestesses. Paculla Minia Campana altered every thing, as if
“ directed by the gods so to do : she first initiated men, Menius
“ and Herennius, her own sons ; and instead of confining the
“ time of initiation to three days in the year, she extended it to
“ five times every month, and fixed the time in the night. By
“ this means the sacred rites became common, the men and women
“ made but one company, and the darkness increased their licen-
“ tiousness : no wickedness, no abomination, was left unpractised.
“ If there was any one who resented their insults, or came behind
“ them in wickedness, he was sacrificed as a victim ; nor did they
“ blush to glory in this as the height of their religion.

“ THE men prophesied with fanatical tossing of their bodies, as
“ if they were possessed ; and the women, with their hair dishe-
“ velled, and dressed after the manner of Bacchanals, ran to the
“ Tyber with burning torches, which they plunged into the wa-
“ ter, and drew out still in a flame. Whoever refused to join
“ with them, or partake of their guilt, or submit to their inde-
“ cencies, they bound on a machine, and hurried out of sight to
“ some unfrequented wood, pretending that the gods had taken
“ him. There were among them many of the first quality of
“ both sexes ; and after two years they made a rule, that no per-
“ son should be initiated who was more than twenty years of age ;
“ judging,

“judging, that such were most likely to be seduced to their
“ errors, and submit to their debaucheries.”

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To all these instances of the flagitious character of the Roman women, we may add, that they appear to have been the first who practised the trade of prostitution in their own country ; it seems to have been a custom from the earliest antiquity, that the prostitutes of every nation, were women who resorted to them from other nations, and were called strangers ; hence a strange woman, and an harlot, generally signify the same thing in scripture ; and hence the repeated injunctions which Solomon laid upon his son, not to give his strength to strange women. This custom of women betaking themselves to another country when they became prostitutes, we have reason to believe, was universal among the ancients ; whether it was, that every people, willing to have it believed that their own women were more virtuous than those of their neighbours, would not suffer them to prostitute themselves at home ; or whether such women as took upon them this shameful trade, were instigated by some little remains of modesty, to leave their own country and practise it among strangers ; we shall not take upon us to determine : but we are assured, that the Greeks, however debauched and licentious, commonly adhered to this custom, while the Romans, who broke through every restraint, paid no regard to it.

Courtezans
were general-
ly strangers.

BUT lewdness and debauchery were not the only vices of the Roman women ; through the whole of their existence as a nation, the Romans were remarkable for their cruelty. Several of their laws, as that which gave to fathers a power of life and death over their children, and to husbands a power hardly less extensive over their wives, are a proof of this : but it appears in
a still

Cruelty of
the Roman
women.

a still stronger light, when we consider the barbarous treatment of their slaves, by whips and tortures; and the deluges of blood which were shed almost by every usurper of the empire, sometimes from suspicion, oftener perhaps from mere wantonness and barbarity of nature, the spectacles of wild beasts, tearing criminals and captives to pieces, and gladiators hacking one another down for the amusement of the public; and last of all, their behaviour towards these unhappy nations who were conquered by their arms. Nor was Roman cruelty only a male vice, the softer sex were far from being proof against the contagion. In the two hundred and twentieth year of Rome, Tullia, the daughter of Severus, then king of the Romans, having, with her husband Tarquin, conspired to assassinate her father, and place themselves on the throne in his stead; the order for the atrocious deed being given in a tumult of the people, the infamous Tullia, mounted her chariot with an air of triumph to return to her house; in the street through which she was drove, the murderers had just left the king's body bleeding and hardly breathless; the dismal spectacle struck the charioteer with horror, he checked his horses, and petrified with amazement, could not proceed! Why do not you go on; cries Tullia, what stops you? Alas! said he, turning about to her as he spoke, That is the body of the king, your father! At these words, snatching up a stool that was in the chariot, and throwing it at his head, Go on, cried she, and do not be afraid of driving over a dead body. The driver obeyed, and the blood of the father is said to have stained the chariot and the cloaths of the inhuman daughter. Antony having ordered Cicero to be beheaded, and the head to be brought to him, when it arrived, his wife, Fulvia, laid hold of it, struck it on the face, uttered many bitter execrations, and placing it between her knees, drew out the tongue, and pierced it with a bodkin. To these we

might

might easily add many more instances of the cruelty of the Roman women, but we drop a subject so disagreeable.

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AFTER the Romans became acquainted with Asia, in whatever light we view their women, they scarcely exhibit any amiable qualities, except some imperfect relics of their ancient patriotism, a virtue, which unless exercised with the greatest moderation, scarcely ever adorns the female character. As wives, we have seen that the Roman matrons were frequently unchaste; as mothers, not less frequently careless and unnatural, luxurious and extravagant beyond measure; at last, they became almost entirely the creatures of ambition, and of pleasure; even religion, which almost in every age and country, seems to have been more devoutly cultivated by the women than the men, does not appear at Rome to have had any superior power over the female heart; their women attended at processions, when any public calamity was to be averted, and were sometimes made priestesses of certain temples; but we read of few peculiar acts of their piety, and of few sacrifices which they offered to propitiate the gods of their country.

SUCH is the general character of the Roman women; were we to descend to more particulars, we might give instances almost without end of their depravity, and not a few of their virtue. Before the Republic was contaminated with the riches, which from every quarter of the plundered globe flowed to Rome, they were in general the best of wives, of mothers, and of citizens; having by their mediation, advice, and money, several times saved the sinking state; and it is with pleasure we remark, that even amid the general depravity we have been delineating, there

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still appeared many amiable and virtuous characters, who bravely stemmed the tide of popular corruption, and in ages overrun with every vice, stood forth the advocates of virtue, of maternal tenderness, and of conjugal fidelity; preserving their children and husbands, from falling victims to the horrid proscriptions of Octavius, Antony, Lepidus, Nero, and many others, who, with a barbarity which can hardly be equalled in history, caused to be murdered in cool blood one half of the nobility of Rome.

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C H A P. XII.

The same subject continued.

LEAVING the Romans, and proceeding in our enquiry, we again descend into the regions of historical obscurity, where we are presented with a group of nations and people, now hardly distinguishable from each other, and of many of whom, we scarcely know any thing but the names. Of such people it would be vain, as well as ridiculous, to attempt a minute and circumstantial character; we shall, therefore, content ourselves with sketching the outlines of it among that group of northern nations, which we have no authentic accounts to enable us to delineate more distinctly.

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THOUGH in a state of the utmost uncultivation of manners, and attached to religions which inculcated but few of the precepts of morality; and in many cases directly contradicted them; the women of the ancient northern nations were not destitute of virtue and of excellence; early in life, they learned that modesty which adorned their character; and that industry which often maintained themselves and their husbands, when these failed to procure subsistence by their hunting, or their depredations: educated by chaste mothers, and fortified in female virtue by every example around them, chastity became almost an innate principle in their minds, and daily acquired strength by the contempt which was thrown by the men upon those who disregarded it; a contempt so great, that no woman could violate her chastity, without precipitating herself into the most dismal certainty of perpetual celibacy, as

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the ancient
northern wo-
men.

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none could in this case entertain even a distant hope of pardon, or of a husband, who was not, as in modern times, to be obtained by riches, nor the alliance of the great, but only by personal attractions, most strictly attached to unspotted personal virtue.

TACITUS draws a beautiful picture of ancient German simplicity and chastity, in the following words: " A strict regard for the
" matrimonial state characterises the Germans, and deserves our
" highest applause. Among them female virtue runs no hazard
" of being debauched by the outward objects of the senses, or of
" being corrupted by such social gaieties as inflame the passions;
" chastity once forfeited is never forgiven; vice is not made the
" object of mirth and raillery, nor is fashion pleaded as an excuse
" for being corrupt, or for corrupting others; good customs and
" manners avail more among those barbarous people, than good
" laws among such as are more refined." We are apt to place the greatest purity of manners, in particular states of cultivation and refinement; experience, however, shews us that we are often in the wrong. From this account of Tacitus, the ancient Germans appear to have exceeded in some points of morality, the most polished and instructed nations of Europe; nor were the Goths behind them, they deemed purity of manners their distinguishing characteristic, and therefore they said, " Though we punish for-
" nication in our own countrymen, we pardon it in the Romans,
" as they are by nature and education weak, and incapable of
" reaching to our sublimity of virtue."

Laws protect-
ing chastity.

BY an ancient law of Iceland, any one who kissed a woman against her inclination, was condemned to exile; and even he who obtained her consent, subjected himself thereby to a fine of three marks of silver. We have in a former chapter taken notice
of

of some laws of this nature among the northern nations, and shall here add, that they were in general so solicitous of the honour of their women, and took such care that no indecency should be offered to them, that their laws in most places prescribed the manner in which the two sexes should behave to each other. The Goths prohibited even a surgeon from bleeding a free woman, unless in the presence of her father, mother, brother, son, or some other near relation; and fixed a fine upon a man who presumed to touch a woman against her will, according to her quality, and the part of her body he touched. In other places, a fine was also imposed on him who kissed a woman, except in sporting, at convivial meetings, or on returning from a long journey. These, and many other laws of the same nature, among the inhabitants of the north, not only stood as so many sentinels on the threshold of virtue, but by rendering all access to the fair sex so exceedingly difficult, and even dangerous, taught men to look up to them as a kind of superior beings, and stamped upon them a value which arose nearly to adoration; a value, which they never can attain to, where modern freedom and gallantry make the access to them so easy; and, where their own vanity prompts them to appear constantly in every public place, and cheapen themselves by a visible fondness to be disposed of. There is not perhaps in nature a more general law, than that which induces us to value every thing in proportion to the pains and labour it has cost us, the women of the nations we are considering, naturally chaste, proud, and difficult of access, both by custom and by law, were not to be gained by every slight attack, nor did they yield to every pretended admirer: nothing but a lover's rendering himself worthy of his mistress by valour, and every other acquisition then in estimation, could make her propi-

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tious to his wishes ; hence he seldom got possession of the object of his heart, but after a long train of labours and difficulties, and the value he had for her, was measured by the retrospective view of all that he had gone through on her account. But a further discussion of this subject will fall more naturally under the head of courtship.

AN historian endeavouring to delineate the characters of people so little known, as many of those we have already mentioned, as well as those we are now considering, may be compared to an antiquarian, solicitous about discovering the real size of our ancestors, in the times when they were said to be gigantic ; but not being able any where to find an entire statue, or skeleton, can only find the foot or hand of a statue, or the bone of an arm or leg of a skeleton ; when calculating that such parts of a regularly formed body, bear such proportions to the whole, he can discover with a tolerable degree of precision what the size of the whole was. In like manner, though the historian has only broken and interrupted sketches of the character of a people, he may, by carefully comparing them together, and tracing the relations they bear to the virtues and vices that make up the whole of a human character, be able to form a tolerable conjecture concerning the people to whom they belong. Thus from every anecdote handed down to us of the women of the north, we may delineate them to have been chaste, frugal, industrious, and possessed of some little share of knowledge, which gave them in many respects a superiority over the men, who were to the last degree ignorant. With all these good qualities they seem to have had a mixture of pride and ferocity in their nature, not very consistent with that female softness and delicacy which the men in general so much admire.

SUCH,

SUCH, perhaps, was nearly the general character of the fair sex, from the earliest infancy of the northern nations, till towards the decline of chivalry, when it began to assume a more degenerate appearance, and for several ages continued to be only a composition of brutality and debauchery, from which again it is happily emerged. In the sixth century, when the passions seem to have been divided between religion and debauchery, and the churches equally appropriated to the prayers of the saint and the profligacy of the sinner, it was no uncommon thing to seize on a woman, carry her by force, or decoy her by fraud, to the church, and there detain and debauch her; nor could her relations, nor the laws, rescue her from the arms of her ravisher, while he chose to keep within the walls of the sacred asylum. In the reign of Charlemagne, it was a custom in France to collect together all the strumpets they could find, and make them run races for the entertainment of the public. And in the time of Lewis XI. a favourite theatrical entertainment was the Judgment of Paris; when three of the most handsome of their female players, naked as they were born, represented the three goddesses, who submitted themselves in this condition to the judgment of that youth. Whether it was consistent with female modesty to be present at such entertainments, must be judged of from the complexion of the times: we will venture to affirm, however, that no circumstances could make it consistent with delicacy. We have had occasion formerly to mention, that the worship of polluted deities, and celebration of religious ceremonies remarkable for impurity, have greatly contributed to contaminate the manners; and we cannot help here observing, that though the object of christian adoration, and the rites of the christian religion, are the most pure and holy, the ministers of that religion were, in the times we are speaking of,

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quite the reverse. When almost every priest, who should have taught by example as well as by precept, gave himself up to lewdness, and publicly kept often a variety of loose women about him, what can we expect from the people? When the priests and the people were licentious, the women could not escape the contagion; every rank was whirled into the vortex of lewdness, and the rudest vulgarity of manners. The queen of Navarre published a volume of Tales, almost too indelicate for the ear of a courtesan. Queen Elizabeth of England was not only much addicted to swearing, but even to the most vulgar and familiar kind of oaths, which she uttered in a vulgar and indelicate manner. About her time, however, the manners of Europe were beginning to assume that chastity and elegance for which we are now so happily distinguished. But before we survey the character and conduct of the present European women, it is necessary for us to take a view of the other parts of the globe, and proceed gradually from those states approaching the nearest to nature, to those where the human species has received the highest polish from art.

Chastity little
valued in sa-
vage life.

THE nearer that mankind approach to a savage state, the less difference in every age and in every country is perceivable among them: in this state, their observations, their pursuits, are narrow and limited; their attachments few, but strong; and their resentments lasting and implacable. Beyond these, their condition admits of little variation; consequently their character, which in polished nations is formed and influenced by a thousand different circumstances and situations, having but few of these to operate upon it, is marked with much stronger, though fewer and more uniform appearances.

IN

IN savage life, female delicacy has no existence : the most absolute nakedness raises not a blush ; nor can any action excite the idea of shame : and as chastity itself has not, in many places, the same value stamped upon it as in civil society, deviations from it are either considered as no fault, or at most as a fault of a very trifling nature, which neither draws down on a delinquent the ridicule and contempt of her own sex, nor the neglect and desertion of ours. The instances we could give of this would be almost endless. Among the Natches, husbands voluntarily lend their wives to each other, and married as well as unmarried women, without the least ceremony, offer themselves to strangers ; nay, in some places, they even complain to their countrymen, and desire them to revenge the indignity they have suffered, when refused by a stranger. In the district of the Hurons, not the least degree of criminality is fixed upon her who offers herself to prostitution : it is a practice, into which girls are early initiated by their parents, and in which the custom of their country continues them through life. In many parts of South America, so little restraint is laid on the commerce of the sexes, that it plainly appears to be considered as an object not worthy of legislation. Don Ulloa reports, that the ancient Peruvians did not knowingly marry such women as were virgins, and if on trial they found them such, were highly affronted at being imposed upon : and it is said, that in the kingdom of Thibet, no woman who has not been deflowered is reckoned fit for matrimony.

THE Brazilian women are so far from paying any regard to chastity, that they even violate every principle of decency ; not being in the least ashamed to prepare and administer to the men stimulating potions, to create or increase their natural desires ;

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which

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which when they wish to raise to an extravagant height, the passions sometimes prove mortal. At Mindanao, as soon as a stranger arrives, the natives flock about him, and eagerly invite him to their houses: the person whose invitation he accepts, is sure to offer him a female companion, whom he is obliged to accept, and to return a genteel present for the unsolicited favour. This custom, which, besides implying an absolute and disposing power in the male, likewise supposes female unchastity to be a matter of no consideration, is observed at Pulo Condore, Pegu, Siam, Cochin-China, Cambodia, in some places of the East-Indies, and on the coast of Guinea. In Otaheite, chastity does not seem to be considered as one of the virtues, nor is the most public violation of it looked upon either as criminal or indecent. The women not only readily and openly trafficked with the English sailors for personal favours, but were brought by their fathers and brothers for that purpose, as to a market; and those who brought them were always abundantly conscious of the superior value of youth and beauty.

Savage women destitute of softness.

BESIDES a strict regard to chastity, there is in the female character a certain softness of temper and disposition, mixed with a kind of timidity and inclination to pity, which may vie with delicacy, beauty, and even with modesty itself, in rendering a woman amiable in the eyes of every beholder. But of this quality savage women in every climate are almost entirely destitute. Brought up amid the storms of rough and inhospitable climates; exposed to the vicissitudes of hunger and of cold; obliged to procure most of their food by carnage and destruction; and constantly accustomed to scenes of cruelty; their hearts are steeled against every soft sensation; and pity, one of the most engaging ornaments of the female

female mind, reckoned a weakness, which it is incumbent on them to subdue. We have therefore no reason to expect in them any of that engaging softness, which constitutes the essence of female friendship, and forcibly engages the heart : nay, so far are they, in general, from being susceptible of any of the compassionate sensations, that the very reverse is their character.

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AMONG many of the tribes of North Americans, the women commonly go out to meet the warriors on their return home ; and though these warriors have treated their captives, from the moment they fell into their hands, with an inhumanity of which we can hardly form any idea ; yet the period of their real sufferings may be said only to commence at the time they are met by the women. It is almost incredible to believe, with what degree of transport and rage these furies attack them ; and he only can form any conception of it, who has frequently witnessed the power of the passions over the female mind, and their concentrated power over the female savage ; where being but few in number, their whole strength is collected, as it were, into a focus. Has any woman among those who go out to meet the warriors, lost a husband, a son, a brother, or near relation ; though thirty or forty long years have conspired to blot him out of her remembrance, they have conspired in vain. Frantic with revenge, she falls on the first captive she meets, and violates decency, humanity, and mercy, at every wound. Nor is this the short-lived effort of a sudden passion : she goes on till her bodily strength is quite exhausted ; but the same insatiable thirst of revenge urging her implacable mind, she no sooner recovers herself a little, than she renews the horrid task ; a task, which, with no other interruption than what is absolutely necessary to refresh the ferocious tormentors, generally continues in the camp,

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through the whole of the first night after the arrival of the women: and when the prisoners are afterward finally condemned, when they are led out to suffer, such a scene of torture as the history of no other people ever yet paralleled, and which we think too shocking to describe, the women are the principal executioners, or rather relentless fiends, who inflict tortures that even hell might shudder at.

To those accustomed to softer manners, and to nations less sullied by such inhuman crimes, this female barbarity must appear as unaccountable as it is shocking: but it must be still more so, when we inform our readers, that captive women, though they have not taken up the hatchet, nor come out in an hostile manner, are treated with the same indiscriminate rage of cruelty as the men, and fall at last victims to the lingering tortures inflicted by their own sex.

Cruelty to
captives not
peculiar to
America.

SUCH is the state of chastity, such that of humanity, among the savage women of North America. But from these unpromising specimens we are not rashly to conclude, that they are destitute of every virtue, and of every excellence. Their inhumanity is not so much the effect of nature, as of education. Revenge is a principle, which, from the earliest periods of antiquity, has operated strongly on every ignorant and unlettered people. The Israelites hardly treated their captives with less cruelty than the Americans; they made them pass through the brick-kilns, and under saws and harrows of iron. The practice of almost all the ancients was nearly the same: every country had its tutelar deities; and it was imagined, that a more acceptable service could not be rendered to these, than to stain their altars with the blood of the enemies of that

that country which they patronised; thus, cruelty to captives was almost in every country a religious ceremony, which took such hold of the human mind, that the thoughts of the sufferings of the victims, were totally absorbed in those of the service done to the deity. But, besides this, there was among the ancients another principle, which powerfully urged them to inflict various torments on their captives; the manes, or ghosts, of those who had fallen in battle, were supposed to roam about in a kind of melancholy mood, till their blood was avenged on their enemies; and, they were even sometimes supposed to appear to, and solicit their surviving friends to this vengeance; which was the more fully accomplished, the more horrid the tortures that were inflicted. Strongly excited by the latter, if not also by the former of these motives, we discover that an exuberance of friendship to their deceased relations, is the source from whence arises that variety of torments with which they execute their enemies.

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WERE this horrid barbarity of the American women congenial to their nature, or what they delighted in from mere wantonness, we should reckon them the most execrable of all human beings; but we pity them, when we consider it as the effect of the most unbounded, though mistaken friendship; and indeed, of all the marks which most peculiarly characterise savage life, friendship and hatred are the strongest. As an injury done to a savage, is never to be forgiven; so a good action is held in everlasting remembrance, and commonly attaches him to you in a friendship, which adversity cannot shake, which danger cannot terrify, nor even death itself turn aside from your interest. In places where chastity is required of the sex, this quality makes them the most faithful and inviolable of all wives. Where chastity is not required,

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cruelty.

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quired, if they are but tolerably well used by their husbands, it binds them in an attachment to their interests and persons, far surpassing any thing that we ever meet with in civil society. As to their other qualities, they are submissive and obedient to their husbands; patient sufferers of hunger, cold, pain, and all that variety of wretchedness to which their lives are daily exposed; strenuous exerters of their powers, when stimulated by want, but seldom blessed with a talent for unremitting industry; and still seldomer, perhaps, with foresight enough to be productive of œconomy. Like all other ignorant people, the most absolute dupes of superstition, by which constantly deceived themselves, they constantly deceive one another, and still more deceive their men, who take the ravings of a distempered female brain, for the infallible suggestions of the Great Spirit.

IN ascending from these scenes, where we are presented with nature in her most rude and uncultivated shape, to those where she is just beginning to put on an appearance something less disgusting, we naturally turn our eyes from the frozen regions and trackless wastes of North America, to the more indulgent climates of Africa and Asia; though we are sorry to say, that, even in many parts of these, we find the progress of civil society and cultivation of manners, to have advanced but a very few degrees beyond the Americans.

Of Africa.

IN travelling over the vast peninsula of Africa, we naturally expect to find, among so many different people, a great diversity of manners and of character; in this, however, we are much disappointed, for notwithstanding of the great variety of climates that the Africans inhabit, and different forms of government to which

which they are subjected, they are every where nearly the same kind of people ; a general sameness and uniformity of sentiments and usages, running through the whole of those immense regions they possess, with some trifling difference only in the degrees of the same qualities ; and with this remarkable coincidence of the whole, that these qualities are commonly the worst of those which have disgraced human nature ; inasmuch that among their neighbours it is a proverb, that all the inhabitants of the globe have a mixture of good and evil in them, except the Africans.

WHEN we take a survey of the ancient, and the present Africans, it is with some surprise, that while we find their manners and customs to be nearly the same, we discover at the same time, that every spark of genius, and every idea of moral rectitude, seem almost entirely dissipated from among them. The names of Hannibal, of Asdrubal, and Terence, shew that they were formerly famous for heroes, and for poets ; and after the introduction of the Christian religion among them, the names of Cyprian, Augustine, and Tertullian, do credit to their divinity ; they were in old time renowned for their industry in cultivating the ground, for their trade, navigation, caravans, and useful arts ; at present they are infamous for their idleness, ignorance, superstition, treachery ; and above all, for their lawless methods of robbing and murdering all the other inhabitants of the globe, as the piratical states of Tunis and Algiers every day demonstrate.

IT would seem, that lost as they are to almost every virtue, they still retain some sense of their own flagitiousness of character ; but as they do not chuse to amend, their priests, or Marabouts, endeavour to justify them by the following story : “ Noah, say
“ they,

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“ they, was no sooner dead, than his three sons, the first of
 “ whom was white, the second tawny, and the third black,
 “ agreed upon dividing among them his goods and possessions: af-
 “ ter having come to this resolution, the greatest part of the day
 “ was spent in sorting that variety of goods which their father had
 “ left, so that they were obliged to adjourn the division of them
 “ till the next morning: having supped, and smoked a friendly
 “ pipe together, they all went to rest, each in his own tent. Af-
 “ ter a few hours sleep, the white brother got up, seized on the
 “ gold, silver, precious stones, and other things of the greatest
 “ value, loaded the best horses with them, and rode away to that
 “ country where his white posterity have been settled ever since.
 “ The tawny awaking soon after, and with the same criminal in-
 “ tention, was surprised when he came to the storehouse, to find
 “ that his brother had been before-hand with him, but resolving
 “ to make the best of a bad bargain, hastily secured the rest of the
 “ horses and camels, and loading them with the best carpets,
 “ cloaths, and other remaining goods, directed his route to an-
 “ other part of the world, leaving behind him only a few of the
 “ coarsest of the goods, and some provisions of little value. When
 “ the third, or black brother, came next morning, in the honesty
 “ of his heart, to make the proposed division, and could neither
 “ find his brethren, nor any of the valuable commodities, he
 “ easily judged that they had tricked him, and were by that time
 “ fled beyond any possibility of a discovery. In this most afflicting
 “ situation, he took his pipe, and set him down to consider on
 “ the most effectual means of retrieving his loss, and being re-
 “ venged on his perfidious brothers. After revolving a variety of
 “ schemes in his mind, he at last fixed upon watching every op-
 “ portunity of making reprisals on them, and laying hold of, and

“ carrying away their property as often as it should fall in his
 “ way, in revenge for the loss of that patrimony of which they had
 “ so unjustly deprived him : having come to this resolution, he not
 “ only continued in the practice of it all his life, but on his death-
 “ bed laid the strongest injunctions on his descendants to do so to
 “ the end of the world.”

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FROM this short sketch of the general character of the Africans, the prospect before us, when we descend to particulars, is but unpromising, though in some places the gloomy scene is here and there chequered with a few of the virtues. Some of the tribes of wandering Arabs are remarkable for fidelity, when they have engaged themselves in the protection of a stranger. Many of them are conspicuous for their temperance and hospitality, and their women, upon the whole, are far from being indelicate or unchaste. In Egypt, they never appear unveiled, and at public assemblies sit also behind a curtain, that they may not be seen by the men. Among the Hottentots, though they have no claim to delicacy, they are simple and inoffensive, chaste and submissive to their husbands. On the banks of the Niger, they are tolerably industrious, have a considerable share of vivacity, and, at the same time, a female reserve, which would do no discredit to a politer country: they are modest, affable, and faithful, and an air of innocence appears in their looks, in their language, and gives a beauty to their whole deportment. When from the Niger, we approach toward the east, the African women degenerate in stature, complexion, and sensibility, as well as in chastity, that chief of the female virtues; even their language, like their features, and like the soil they inhabit, is harsh and disagreeable, and their pleasures resemble more the transports of fury, than the

Female character in different parts of Africa.

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gentle emotions communicated by agreeable sensations. Upon the western coasts of Africa, are extended for a considerable way, a people called Zase Ibrahims, or offspring of Abraham; they have long flowing hair, and are much fairer than any other of the Africans; but what is most remarkable, they are not like the rest of their countrymen, addicted to plundering, nor to murder, being of a free, liberal, and hospitable spirit, much given to dancing and to songs, of which love is constantly the subject; and while in many other parts of Africa, both men and women paint in such a manner as to add to their deformity, the women here paint after nature, and improve the charms she has given, by such colours as have the nearest resemblance to her in her most beautiful appearance: to all this we may add, that they are strictly taken care of by their parents, and on that account difficult of access to strangers.

ONE peculiar custom of this people, though not properly belonging to our subject, we cannot help mentioning: none but the chief lords of their country have the privilege of killing any animal, which they always do with a great deal of ceremony; nor would any of the people, though urged by the strongest necessity, eat that which was killed by any other person. Another custom hardly less singular is, that all children born on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, are reckoned accursed, and exposed in the woods to die of cold and hunger, or meet with a more merciful death from the jaws of the wild beasts; but so compassionate are the women, that in spite of the punishments threatened against them by the men, and of the more tremendous terrors held over them by superstition, they frequently steal, and bring up these children privately at the hazard of their own lives. On the banks of the
Gambia,

Gambia, this female character is reversed; though they put on an appearance of modesty, it is in fact nothing but an appearance, and when opportunity offers, they will very readily grant any favour for a little coral, a silk handkerchief, or some trifle of a similar nature.

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BESIDES the places now mentioned, several of which we have only lame and imperfect accounts of, there are in Africa many others, of which we know little more than the names. Ethiopia, Lybia, Zanguebar, and some others, have hitherto been almost impervious to European travellers; and the only people who have dared to enter them, have been Jesuits; whose relations, wherever religion or interest were concerned, have gained no great credit among mankind; and mercantile adventurers, so hot in the pursuit of gain, that they never examined any thing which had not a relation to that subject.

BEYOND the river Volta, in the country of Benin, and almost every where upon the Gold Coast, the women, though far from being famous for any of the virtues, would not be disagreeable in their looks, were it not for the abominable custom of marking their faces with scars, for the same purposes as our European ladies lay on paint. Though in few respects better than savages, there is a particular opinion over all this country, which tends to humanise the mind; this is a firm persuasion, that to whatever place they remove themselves, or are by any accident removed, they shall after death return to their own country, which they consider as the most delightful in the universe. This fond delusive hope not only softens the slavery to which they are often condemned in other countries, but also induces them to treat such

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strangers as come among them with much civility; being persuaded, that they are come there to enjoy paradise, and receive the reward of virtuous actions done in other bodies. The people who border upon Zaara are the most peaceable and good-natured of the Africans; their food is simple, and they bestow little labour in procuring it; they spend a great deal of their time in public amusements; but neither to these, nor to any other places of common resort, are the women ever admitted; assembled together in houses by themselves, they spend the time in female employments and amusements, and no men are ever admitted into their society. This confinement, though not of so strict a nature as in many places of the world, has the effect that confinement generally has upon beings who ought to be free, it renders them less virtuous.

Reflections.

As we cannot give a minute and circumstantial character of the African women, we shall conclude what we have to say on that subject, by observing, that when we look back upon this general and particular character we have drawn, we find the former, which, like all national characters, is drawn from the men, much worse than the latter, which we have chiefly taken from the women; and perhaps even that former is not so bad as it is represented, being sketched out almost entirely, either by declaiming priests of their own nation, or by Europeans, who are strongly prejudiced against the Africans, on account of the losses they have sustained by their plunderings and depredations. These things, no doubt, justly excite our indignation, and extort from us every ungracious epithet; but were we to have the character of the Europeans drawn by an African, would he have more reason to be indulgent to us? No; he might treat us with still greater severity;

what a horrid scene would he probably paint? he would delineate a people, who profess a religion, the precepts of which breathe nothing but gentleness and humanity, in spite of nature, and in spite of that religion, carrying away by fraud and force, every year, thousands of his helpless countrymen into slavery; he would tell how their merciless masters exact from them a labour superior to their strength, and even suffer that strength to fail for want of sustenance; he would tell of the whips, the tortures, and the deaths inflicted on his countrymen, should they ever happen to consider themselves as human beings, or venture to assert the rights of nature and of humanity!—he would tell—but we desist from the dismal tale, as we feel ourselves almost transformed into Africans while we relate it.

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IN our progress from America to Africa, we meet with but little improvement in the manners and character of the people; and when from Africa we pass into Asia, we find that they have only left the Africans a very few degrees behind them, almost in every thing but peacefulness of disposition and gentleness of manners. While the African, like the tyger of his forests, lies in wait to plunder and destroy; the Asiatic, contented with a little rice, and some of the simplest productions of nature, reclines beneath the shade, and gives labour and luxury to the winds; let him but enjoy his rice, his women, and his ease, and he asks no more.

General character of the
Asiatics.

THE beautiful scenes which present themselves on the banks of the Ganges, and along the plains of Hindostan, are almost beyond description; the air is perfumed at some seasons with the most delicious fragrance, arising from a variety of flowers, and no less a
number

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number of fruits, which yield a wholesome and refreshing nourishment. The trees form a shade impenetrable to the rays of the sun : here bountiful Nature has left the Asiatic nothing to pursue but pleasure ; and hardly any thing else do the Hindoos, who are the ancient inhabitants of the country, pursue. Relaxed by the climate, more than half of this pleasure consists in ease and indolence ; which has taken such hold of them, that a saying from one of their favourite authors is frequently in their mouths : “ It is better to sit still than to walk ; better to sleep than to awake ; but death is best of all.” If we may credit some modern travellers, so extravagant is their love of rest, that the women of Allahabad can hardly be prevailed upon to reach out their hands to save their own children, when in danger of being trod to death by carriages passing along the street. Such is the picture of the Hindoos. The Mahommedans have more activity, stronger passions, and a cruelty and ambition which are hardly to be restrained within any bounds.

Sketches of
the character
of their wo-
men.

IN considering the character of the Asiatic women, there are two things which claim our utmost attention. The first is, that the narrow and limited sphere in which they move, almost entirely divests them of every thing that arises from liberty and society, and consequently of much of their characteristic distinction. The second, that they are so closely shut up from the observation of all Europeans, that our accounts of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect, as well as in many points false and ridiculous. We may, however, observe of them in general, that as a spring bent by an external force is constantly endeavouring to restore itself ; so they, unjustly deprived of their liberty, are constantly exerting

all the cunning they are masters of, in order to deceive the tyrants who have secluded them from the world and the sweets of society; and by long custom, assisted by nature, and urged by necessity, they are become great adepts in those arts of deception, which tend to procure them a temporary liberty, or favour an intrigue.

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CHASTITY and unchastity are almost the only things that can characterise the women of the East. Shut up for ever in impenetrable Harams, they can hardly be called creatures of the world, having no intercourse with it, and no use for the social and æconomical virtues which adorn its citizens. If being good wives consists in care, frugality and industry, these are all things entirely out of their power: if being such, consists in loving their husbands, and tenderness to their children; the first of these is also rendered next to impossible by the behaviour of those tyrants who style themselves husbands; and the last is much weakened by transferring upon the children some part of that dislike they have to the father. To the joys of friendship they are, perhaps, entire strangers: the men treat them in such a manner, that it is impossible they can esteem them; the women are their constant rivals. The only virtues, then, which the Asiatic fair can put in practice, are such as relate to their religion, and their chastity; but even in the exercise of religion they are circumscribed. As they are not allowed to attend on the public worship of the gods of their country, they can have no other religion than the silent adoration of the heart; and as to chastity, the manner in which they are disposed of to, or forcibly taken by husbands, and the behaviour of these husbands to them through life, are the most unlikely methods in the world to make them famous for that virtue.

BUT

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Braminical
women, their
conduct.

BUT though these observations may be pretty generally applied to the Asiatic women, there are some exceptions. The Bramins, or priests of India, though they confine their women like the rest of their countrymen, yet, by treating them with lenity and indulgence, they secure their virtue by attaching their hearts. Married to each other in their infancy, they have the greatest veneration for the nuptial tie: their mutual fondness increases with their strength; and in riper years, all the glory of the women consists in pleasing their husbands; a duty which they consider as one of the most sacred of their holy religion, and which the gods will not suffer them to neglect with impunity. While the rest of the Hindoo women take every opportunity to elude their keepers, these voluntarily confine themselves, at least from the company and conversation of all strangers, and in every respect copy that simplicity of life and manners, for which their husbands are so remarkable.

Modesty of
the Chinese
women.

IF we except these we have now mentioned, of all the other Asiatics the Chinese have perhaps the best title to modesty. Even the men wrap themselves closely up in their garments, and reckon it indecent to discover any more of their arms and legs than is necessary: the women, still more closely wrapped up, never discover a naked hand even to their nearest relations, if they can possibly avoid it. Every part of their dress, every part of their behaviour, is calculated to preserve decency, and inspire respect; and what adds the greatest lustre to their charms, is that uncommon modesty which appears in every look, and in every action. Charmed, no doubt, with so engaging a demeanour, the men behave to them in a reciprocal manner; and that their virtue may
not

not be contaminated by the neighbourhood of vice, the legislature takes care that no prostitutes shall lodge within the walls of any of the great towns in China. Such are the Chinese women represented by some travellers; but it is by others doubted, whether this semblance of modesty be any thing else than the custom of the country; and alleged, that notwithstanding of so much seeming decency and decorum, they have their peculiar modes of intriguing, and embrace every possible opportunity of putting them in practice; and that, in these intrigues, they frequently scruple not to stab the paramour they had invited to their arms, as the surest method of preventing detection and loss of character. A few, perhaps, of the most flagitious may be guilty of such enormous crimes; but we persuade ourselves, that they are only very few; and we are happy in having it in our power to inform our fair readers, that such relations are not to be found in any of our modern travellers, whose veracity is most to be relied on.

So different over all the world are the sects of saints, as well as of sinners, that besides the Bramins, a set of innocent and religious priests, who have rendered their women virtuous by treating them with kindness and humanity, there are another sect of religio-philosophical drones, called Fakiers, who contribute as much as they can to debauch the sex, under a pretence of superior sanctity. These hypocritical saints, like some of the ridiculous sects which formerly existed in Europe, wear no clothes; considering them only as proper appendages to sinners, who are ashamed, because they are sensible of guilt; while they, being free from every stain of pollution, have no shame to cover. In this original state of nature, these idle and pretended devotees, assemble together sometimes in armies of ten or twelve thousand, and under a

Of the Fakiers.

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pretence of going in pilgrimage to certain temples, like locusts devour every thing on their way ; the men flying before them, and carrying all that they can out of the reach of their depredations ; while the women, not in the least afraid of a naked army of lusty saints, throw themselves in their way, or remain quietly at home to receive them.

IT has long been an opinion, well established all over India, that there is not in nature so powerful a remedy for removing the sterility of women, as the prayers of these sturdy naked saints. On this account, barren women constantly apply to them for assistance ; which when the good-natured Fakier has an inclination to grant, he leaves his slipper, or his staff, at the door of the lady's apartment with whom he is praying ; a symbol so sacred, that it effectually prevents any one from violating the secrecy of their devotion : but, should he forget this signal, and at the same time be distant from the protection of his brethren, a sound drubbing is frequently the reward of his pious endeavours. But though they will venture sometimes, in Hindostan, to treat a Fakier in this unholy manner ; in other parts of Asia and Africa, such is the veneration in which these lusty saints are held, that they not only have access when they please, to perform private devotions with barren women, but are accounted so holy, that they may at any time, in public or in private, confer a personal favour upon a woman, without bringing upon her either shame or guilt ; and no woman dare refuse to gratify their passion. Nor, indeed, has any one an inclination of this kind ; because she, upon whom this personal favour has been conferred, is considered by herself, and by all the people, as having been sanctified and made more holy by the action.

So much concerning the conduct of the Fakiers, in debauching women, seems certain. But it is by some travellers further related, that wherever they find a woman who is exceedingly handsome, they carry her off privately to one of their temples; but in such a manner, as to make her and the people believe, that she was carried away by the god who is there worshipped; who, being violently in love with her, took that method to procure her for his wife. This done, they perform a nuptial ceremony, and make her further believe, that she is married to the god; when, in reality, she is only married to one of the Fakiers who personates him. Women who are treated in this manner are revered by the people as the wives of the gods, and by that stratagem secured solely to the Fakiers, who have cunning enough to impose themselves as gods upon some of these women, through the whole of their lives. In countries where reason is stronger than superstition, we almost think this impossible: where the contrary is the case, there is nothing too hard to be credited. Something like this was done by the priests of ancient Greece and Rome; and a few centuries ago, tricks of the same nature were practised by the monks, and other libertines, upon some of the visionary and enthusiastic women of Europe. Hence we need not think it strange, if the Fakiers generally succeed in attempts of this nature; when we consider, that they only have to deceive a people brought up in the most consummate ignorance; and that nothing can be a more flattering distinction to female vanity, than for a woman to suppose herself such a peculiar favourite of the divinity she worships, as to be chosen, from all her companions, to the honour of being admitted to his embraces; a favour, which her self-admiration will dispose her more readily to believe than examine.

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Religion
made subser-
vient to pro-
stitution.

BESIDES this method of decoying women into the temples, for the sake of debauchery, there are other temples, where they are supplied with them in a more open manner ; being voluntarily offered by their parents, and dedicated by the priests while infants, with great pomp and solemnity, to the service of their gods ; they dance and sing before the chief idol on solemn festivals, with all the wantonness of venal charms, and temptation of loose attire, in order to attract the spectators, to whom they afterwards prostitute themselves for the benefit of the temple to which they belong ; and at the expence of which they were brought up. When such is the religion of the East, when such are the deities there worshipped, can we expect chastity to be a virtue much regarded among the women, or that the men can secure it by any other methods than locks, bars, and eunuchs ?

BUT it is not the religion of the Hindoos only, that is unfavourable to chastity ; that of Mahomet, which now prevails over a great part of India, is unfavourable to it likewise. Mahomedism every where indulges the men with a plurality of wives, while it ties down the women to the strictest conjugal fidelity ; hence, while the men riot in unlimited variety, the women are in great numbers confined to share among them the scanty favours of one man only. This unnatural and impolitic conduct induces them to seek by art and intrigue, what they are denied by the laws of their prophet. As polygamy prevails over all Asia, this art and intrigue follow as the consequence of it ; some have imagined, that it is the result of climate, but it rather appears to be the result of the injustice which women suffer by polygamy ; for it seems to reign as much in Constantinople, and in every other place

place where polygamy is in fashion, as it does on the banks of the Ganges, or the Indus. The famous Montesquieu, whose system was, that the passions are entirely regulated by the climate, brings as a proof of this system, a story from the collection of voyages for the establishment of an East India Company, in which it is said, that at Patan, “ the wanton desires of the women are “ so outrageous, that the men are obliged to make use of a certain “ apparel to shelter them from their designs.” Were this story really true, it would be but a partial proof of the effect of climate, for why should the burning suns of Patan only influence the passions of the fair? Why should they there transport that sex beyond decency, which in all other climates is the most decent? and leave in so cool and defensive a state, that sex, which in all other climates is apt to be the most offensive and indecent? To whatever length the spirit of intrigue may be carried in Asia and Africa, however the passions of the women may prompt them to excite desire, and to throw themselves in the way of gratification, we have the strongest reasons to reprobate all these stories, which would make us believe, that they are so lost to decency as to attack the other sex; such a system would be overturning nature, and inverting the established laws by which she governs the world.

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IN Otaheite, an island lately discovered in the great Southern Ocean, we are presented with women of a singular character. As far as we can recollect, we think it is a pretty general rule, that wherever the sex are accustomed to be constantly clothed, they are ashamed to appear naked: those of Otaheite seem however to be an exception to this rule; to shew themselves in public, with

Women of
Otaheite.

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with or without clothing, appears to be to them a matter of equal indifference, and the exposition of any part of their bodies, is not attended with the least backwardness or reluctance; circumstances from which we may reasonably infer, that, among them, clothes were not originally invented to cover shame, but either as ornaments, or as a defence against the cold. But a still more striking singularity in the character of these women, and which distinguishes them not only from the females of all other nations, but likewise from those of almost all other animals, is, their performing in public those rites, which in every other part of the globe, and almost among all animals, are performed in privacy and retirement: whether this is the effect of innocence, or of a dissoluteness of manners to which no other people have yet arrived, remains still to be discovered; that they are dissolute, even beyond any thing we have hitherto recorded, is but too certain. As polygamy is not allowed among them, to satisfy the lust of variety, they have a society called Arcoy, in which every woman is common to every man; and when any of these women happens to have a child, it is smothered in the moment of its birth, that it may not interrupt the pleasures of its infamous mother; but in this juncture, should nature relent at so horrid a deed, even then the mother is not allowed to save her child, unless she can find a man who will patronise it as a father; in which case, the man is considered as having appropriated the woman to himself, and she is accordingly extruded from this hopeful society. These few anecdotes sufficiently characterise the women of this island. In some of the adjacent ones, which were visited by his Majesty's ships upon this discovery, if the women were not less unchaste, they were at least less flagitious and indelicate.

As the Turks, who now inhabit a part of Europe, were originally Asiatics, and still retain the manners and customs which they brought from that country, their women are much given to secret gallantry and intrigue; vices which seem however to be the worst part of their character: when we view them in the other departments of female life, we see many amiable qualities conspiring to adorn them, such as benevolence, charity, and a tenderness of feeling, and softness of disposition, to which they have hardly ever reached in the most polished parts of the Christian world. In Lady Montague's description of the visit she made to the lady of the Grand Vizer of Constantinople, her humility, meekness, and charity, are delineated in a manner which does honour to the sex. In her visit to the fair Fatima, while we find the person of an angel, engaged in all the tender offices of a mother, we must be insensible to every feeling, if our hearts do not glow with the description. We are indeed but too apt to throw a veil over every virtue which appears in a people professing a religion so different from our own, and which we have always been taught to consider with partiality, and to look upon with horror; than which, nothing can more certainly indicate weakness of mind and want of urbanity. People of all religions have in them a mixture of vice and virtue; and, on a strict enquiry, we shall find, that vice oftener flows from a bad education and improper customs, than from a bad religion: but should the Mahometans, or any other people, with a religion less pure and holy than that of the Christians, be found to excel them in many of the moral virtues, they certainly on that account deserve the more praise, and we the more reprehension; especially when it is considered what they would probably have done, had they been in our situation.

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Turkish ladies, their character..

WHEN

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Reflections on
the conduct
of the Euro-
peans.

WHEN we take a retrospective view of these imperfect sketches of the character of the American, African, and Asiatic women, when we see almost the whole of it comprised in unremitted endeavours to satisfy a voluptuous appetite, when we see the sex every where abused by slavery or confinement, we cannot help breathing a wish, that both the one and the other were rectified; and from the intercourse that has long subsisted between Europe and many of the countries we have been considering, some amendment in the condition, and reformation in the manners of the women might reasonably have been expected. But the Europeans who have gone abroad, instead of carrying along with them that spirit of moral rectitude, taught by the religion of Jesus, which ought to have demonstrated their superior virtue as well as superior knowledge, seem in general, the moment they left their own country, to have thrown aside every principle, and every idea, but that of amassing wealth, though at the expence of probity, and of conscience; and instead of introducing more order and regularity among the ignorant people they visited, have but too often given a loose to every voluptuous appetite, and outdone in every species of debauchery, those who were neither restrained by their laws, nor their religion; nor has this flagitious conduct been peculiar to one European nation only, all those who have planted colonies, and extended their commerce, have been almost equally infamous for cruelty, oppression, and debauchery.

Soon after the Portuguese had conquered India, laying aside that martial spirit for which they were then so famous, they gave themselves up to all those excesses which render the human race odious, and became such monsters, that poison, conflagration, and assassination, with every other crime, grew familiar to them.

They massacred the natives; they destroyed one another; and while they raised the hatred of these natives, they lost the courage to make themselves feared. In the island of Amboyna, a Portuguese had, at a public festival, seized upon a beautiful woman, and regardless of decency, proceeded to offer her the greatest outrage. One of the islanders, highly resenting such a conduct, first armed his fellow-citizens, and afterward calling together the Portuguese, addressed them in the following manner: “ To revenge
 “ affronts of so cruel a nature as these we have received from
 “ you, would require actions, not words; yet we will speak to
 “ you. You preach to us a Deity, who delights, you say, in generous actions; but theft, murder, obscenity, and drunkenness,
 “ are your common practices. Your hearts are inflamed with
 “ every vice; our manners can never agree with yours. Nature
 “ foresaw this, when she separated us by immense oceans, but
 “ ye have overleaped her barriers: this audacity, of which you
 “ are not ashamed to boast, is a proof of the corruption of your
 “ hearts. Take my advice, leave to their repose these nations
 “ that resemble you so little: go, fix your habitations among those
 “ who are brutal as yourselves. An intercourse with you would
 “ be more fatal to us, than all the evils which it is in the power
 “ of your god to inflict upon us. We renounce your alliance for
 “ ever. Your arms are superior to ours, but we are more just than
 “ you, and we do not fear you; the Itons are from this day your
 “ enemies, fly from their country, and beware how you approach
 “ it any more.”

SUCH were the sentiments of one whom we call a savage, on the behaviour of the Portuguese. When a governor of sense and humanity happened to preside over their colonies, he endeavoured

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to reform the manners, and restrain the rapacity, of his countrymen ; but his single virtue was always feeble and unavailing, when opposed to the vices of a contaminated people. The Spaniards, who in many places succeeded them, not only copied, but even in time fairly exceeded, the original example. Few of our readers can be strangers to the cruelties and debaucheries they committed in Mexico and Peru, where they built churches, endeavoured to explain the mysteries of the Christian religion to the natives, in a language of which they did not understand one word ; and afterward piously slaughtered them as heretics, for not believing what had been so clearly demonstrated to them. When they had conquered the island of Hispaniola, they made peace with the natives, on condition that they should cultivate all the land for their use, and furnish them with a certain quantity of gold every month. The poor wretches, finding the task insupportable, as well as impossible, took shelter in their mountains, where they hoped to maintain themselves till the Spaniards should be obliged by famine to evacuate their island. But the Spaniards, in the mean time receiving a supply of provisions from Europe, pursued them to their fastnesses ; to revenge, as they said, the injustice they had suffered ; trained their dogs to hunt and destroy them, in places which to themselves were inaccessible ; and, fired with superstition and a thirst of blood, some of them made a vow to destroy twelve Indians every day, in honour of the twelve Apostles. What uneasiness would it have given to men so mild and benevolent, had they thought that their names would have been prostituted to such infamous purposes !

HUMANITY recoils at this dismal recital, and sincerely wishes, that the other powers who have usurped a right in the Indies could
be

be absolved from similar crimes; but the immense plunder lately brought to England from the plains of Hindostan and banks of the Ganges, are but too evident proofs of what our countrymen have there committed. Such loads of treasure are not the produce of the paths of peace, nor even of the fields stained with blood, and disfigured by the horrors of war; unless that war, like a deluge, indiscriminately levels friend and enemy as it goes along. Avarice, sordid avarice, seems alone to have occupied the breasts of the greatest part of these who have travelled from Europe to the Indies; and from so fruitful a source has sprung up almost every other crime. An Englishman who was shipwrecked on the coast of Africa, being taken and condemned to death by the natives, was saved by a woman of some distinction in the country; who, on a promise that he would marry her, contrived to escape along with him. The wretch had no sooner arrived in an European settlement, than he sold his deliverer for a slave, and abandoned her for ever. But the vices are not solely attached to the men who have left Europe in pursuit of gain: even the women who have accompanied them, leaving behind them the gentleness of European manners and of female nature, have been often hardly less distinguished for debauchery and cruelty than the men. A virago of this sort in the East or West-Indies, seldom meeting with any opposition to her whim and caprice, assumes at last a spirit of presumption and tyranny; and lost to feeling and humanity, wields the whip with such dexterity, as to fetch at every stroke blood from the back of the naked and unresisting slave; whose only fault was, that he did not anticipate the wishes of his mistress, or because he let fall some hints, that he was a creature of the same genus as herself.

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*The same Subject continued.*C H A P.
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AFTER having traced the character of the fair sex through so many countries, where we have found the vicious and the disagreeable too frequently to be predominant; we now with the utmost pleasure turn towards Europe, where the beauties of their character, like those of their persons, will not only engage our attention, but also attract our hearts. We cannot, however, extend our plan so far as to hold up to view every beauty and every blemish, which gives a lustre or a deformity to the fair, through all the different countries of Europe; we shall therefore only endeavour to draw the outlines of characters, too various and complicated for us to finish with any tolerable degree of precision.

General
sketch of the
character of
European wo-
men.

WE have already observed, that chastity has, in all polished nations, been ever esteemed the principal ornament of the female character; and we now aver, that this was never more remarkably the case, in any part of the world, than at present in Europe. Here we worship no deities that delight in debauchery, as among the ancients; nor such as, regardless of moral good and evil, concern not themselves about human actions, as in some parts of the world, among the moderns. Hence the conduct of our women, besides being influenced by the superior regard paid to chastity among us, is still further influenced by a veneration for that purity
of

of manners and of character, so strongly inculcated by the precepts of the Christian religion ; and hence, though declaimers and satirists in every nation of Europe paint their own women as the most lewd and abandoned in the world, we boldly affirm, that Europe in general is more famous for the chastity and other good qualities of its women, than any other part of the globe ; for the truth of which we need only appeal to the personal experience of the traveller, and to the reading of the historian ; both of which afford an ample demonstration of our assertion. We must, however, observe here, that the virtues of modesty and chastity do not flourish most, where they are endeavoured to be forced upon the women by locks, bolts, and gouvernantes, as in Spain ; nor where unrestrained liberty and politeness are carried to the greatest length, as in France and Italy ; but rather, where, with no other curb on their personal freedom than what decency requires, they have not carried the refinements of politeness to such an excess, as to reckon every restraint upon inclination a mark of rustication and ill-breeding.

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IN endeavouring to sketch some rude draughts of the character of the European women, we shall take a view of them as they appear in the principal nations of which it is composed ; and as the French reckon themselves of all other people the most conspicuous, we shall begin with them ; a distinction to which we reckon them justly entitled, as they are the fruitful source of half the fashions that embellish, and perhaps of more than half the foibles that disgrace, Europe.

As chastity is a virtue which does not seem to flourish in a soil, where too much or too little culture is bestowed upon it, we must
Of the French women,
 not

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not expect to find it remarkably vigorous among the French, where politeness is the first of all the virtues, and where chastity would hardly be entitled to a place as the second. When travellers, who have always been accustomed to countries where women are much on the reserve, enter France, where the very reverse in almost every particular is the case; before they have coolly considered the customs of different countries, they are apt to conclude that the French have no decency and no chastity among them. Such conclusions are, however, by much too hasty: we must not be led by appearances: a French woman of the most unblemished reputation will, in compliance with the customs of her country, act with a levity and freedom, both of words and actions, which in England would be almost an infallible indication of a strumpet; while in France it only indicates, that a woman has seen the world. We would not, however, insinuate from this, that chastity is among the French a prevailing virtue: the number of mistresses kept by the married as well as the single; the little discredit thrown on the profession of a prostitute, especially if she is an Opera girl, are proofs of this; and we may add, the general desire of intrigue among the women, and the little notice taken of it by the men; both of which have at length established it as a fashion; and in France, not to be fashionable, is a condition much more dreaded, than not to be virtuous.

IN every country in the world, women have always a little to do, and a great deal to say. In France, notwithstanding of the Salique law, they dictate almost every thing that is said, and direct every thing that is done: they are the most restless set of beings in the world; ever in the hurry of action, either about their own affairs, or those of other people; and equally busy and solicitous
about

about settling the affairs of the nation, or sticking a pin in its proper place : to fold her hands in idleness and impose silence on her tongue, would be to a French-woman worse than death ; the sole joy of her life is to be engaged in the prosecution of some scheme, the more intricate and arduous the better ; and so much the better still, if fashion, ambition, or love be the subject. Nor is their activity confined to the gay and the pleasant, they even enter sometimes into the most serious and momentous concerns of life ; the profoundest depths of politics are not hid from them, and the most solemn councils have often been summoned, and affairs of the utmost consequence debated, when the decision had been previously settled by their address and artifices. Among the rich and opulent, they are entirely the votaries of pleasure, which they pursue through all her labyrinths, at the expence of fortune, reputation, and health. Giddy and extravagant to the last degree, they leave to their husbands œconomy and care, which would only spoil their complexions, and furrow their brows. When 'we descend to tradesmen and mechanics, the case is reversed ; the wife manages every thing in the house and shop, while the husband lounges in the back-shop an idle spectator, or struts about in his sword and bagwig.

Matrimony is in France a thing entirely different from what it is in all other parts of Europe ; it does not there subject the helpless female to obedience, to duty, or even to fidelity, but gives her a right to an unbounded liberty and the fortune of her husband, while it confers on the husband hardly any right but that of calling her his wife. In fashionable life, and indeed among all ranks, as all aspire at being fashionable, it seems to be a bargain entered into by a male and female to bear the same name, live in the same house, and pursue their separate pleasures without

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without restraint or controul : and so religiously is this part of the bargain kept, that both parties shape their course exactly as convenience or inclination may dictate, spurning the joys of friendship at home, and contemning the censure of the world abroad ; they live in the same house, but seldom see each other, having different apartments, different sets of acquaintance, different servants, a different equipage, and different tables. Jealousy is not to be expected here, it is a monster which springs from love ; but as a French couple come together without love, they live without jealousy, and commonly jog through life together, enjoying but little happiness, and feeling perhaps no misery on account of each other.

Learning of
the French
women.

In the midst of every levity and fashionable folly, there is no part of the world where literature is more cultivated by the fair sex than in France, nor any part where the company of men of letters is by them more coveted ; a circumstance, which, while it diffuses knowledge among the women, gives an elegance and cheerfulness to the men, and renders them men of the world as well as of letters ; and a circumstance, which has taught many of the French-women the valuable secret of reconciling pleasure to improvement : but a secret so valuable, and so rare in the female world, is not entirely owing to this circumstance, education also has a share in it ; brought up for the most part in convents, books are often the only means they have of beguiling the tedious hours of inactivity and silence, and a fondness for them once contracted, the habit frequently remains for life. Such is female influence over literature, as well as over every other thing in France, that by much the greatest part of the productions of the press are calculated for their capacity ; and happy is the

author who meets with their general approbation, it is the ladder by which he must climb to fame, and the fountain which will assuredly yield him profit.

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It is the property of real and unaffected politeness to banish all the stiffness, and throw aside those airs of reserve, which in every country appear more conspicuous as the inhabitants approach more towards barbarism; in no country does this politeness manifest itself more than in France, where the company of the women is accessible to every man who can recommend himself by his dress, and by his address. To affectation and prudery the French women are equally strangers; easy and unaffected in their persons and manners, their politeness has so much the appearance of nature, that one would almost believe no part of it to be the effect of art. An air of sprightliness and gaiety fits perpetually on their countenances, and their whole deportment seems to indicate, that their only business is to strew the path of life with flowers. Persuasion hangs on their lips, and though their volubility of tongue is indefatigable, so soft is their accent, so lively their expression, so various their attitudes, that they fix the attention for hours together on a tale of nothing. In short, if a man is not too far gone in the spleen, there is no cure so certain as the company of a lively French-woman; but if he is totally overrun with that disease, her company will augment every symptom, and he will paint her as a late snarling traveller did, all folly and impertinence.

Easy and
gaiety of the
French wo-
men.

The peculiar province of beauty is to captivate at the first sight, and to retain the captive in chains, only for the short time that is necessary to discover they were forged by beauty alone. The

Their levity.

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French-women in general, not being remarkable for beauty, seldom jump into the affections of a man all at once, but gain upon him by degrees, and practise every female art to retain him in their service as long as inclination or convenience shall dictate; but the wind, or the fashions which she follows, are hardly more inconstant than a French lady's mind; her sole joy is in the number of her admirers, and her sole pride in changing them as often as possible; over the whole of them she exercises the most absolute power, and they are zealously attentive even to prevent her wishes, by performing whatever they think she has any inclination to, their time, their interest, and activity, become wholly devoted to her will, or rather to her caprice, and they must not presume to exempt any talent or power from the most slavish servitude to her pleasure; even the purse, that most inaccessible thing about a Frenchman, must pour out its last sous, at the call of his mistress; and should he fail in this particular, he would be immediately discarded from her train, with a stigma of preferring Mercury to Venus, which would effectually prevent him from ever gaining admittance into the train of any other of the fair; a mortification which being exceedingly unfashionable, would to a Frenchman be almost intolerable.

THE French-women reckon themselves the only females in the world who can dress with elegance, and behave with genuine and unaffected ease, notions which are diffused so much over all Europe, that these women lead every fashion, and dictate to every people the manner of behaviour; hence they have contracted a national pride, which is apt to make them look down on the inhabitants of every other country as miserable beings, but a few degrees above savage barbarity. Such absolute votaries of pleasure,

sure, they have but little time for any other pursuit, even religion must give place to this darling passion; while a French-woman is able to drink at the stream of pleasure, she is generally an atheist; as her taste for that diminishes, she becomes gradually religious, and when she has lost it altogether, is the most bigotted devotee. Maternal affection must not interrupt the business of pleasure. Few women in France, who can afford to do otherwise, nurse, or take much care of their children when young; but for this neglect they make some reparation, by solicitously using all their interest to provide for them when they become capable of entering into the army or the church. But to conclude, on comparing the different accounts of the French females with each other, we are of opinion, that they rather sacrifice too much of their delicacy to wit, and of their chastity to good-breeding; that they pay too little regard to character, and too much to a ridiculous opinion, that fashionable people are above it; that in fine, they are too much the creatures of art, and have almost discarded nature as much from their feelings as from their faces.

If chastity is none of the most shining virtues of the French, it is still less so of the Italians. Almost all the travellers who have visited Italy, agree in describing it as the most abandoned of all the countries of Europe. At Venice, at Naples, and indeed in almost every part of Italy, women are taught from their infancy, the various arts of alluring to their arms the young and unwary, and of obtaining from them, while heated by love or wine, every thing that flattery and false smiles can obtain in these unguarded moments; and so little infamous is the trade of prostitution, and so venal the women, that hardly any rank or

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women.

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condition sets them above being bribed to it, nay they are even frequently assisted by their male friends and acquaintances to drive a good bargain ; nor does their career of debauchery finish with their unmarried state : the vows of fidelity which they make at the altar, are like the vows and oaths made upon too many other occasions, only considered as nugatory forms, which law has obliged them to take, but custom absolved them from performing. They even claim and enjoy greater liberties after marriage than before ; every married woman has a cicisbio, or gallant, who attends her to all public places, hands her in and out of her carriage, picks up her gloves or fan, and a thousand other little offices of the same nature ; but this is only his public employment, as a reward for which, he is entitled to have the lady as often as he pleases at a place of retirement sacred to themselves ; where no person, not even the most intrusive husband must enter, to be witness of what passes between them. This has been considered by people of all other nations, as a custom not altogether consistent with chastity and purity of manners ; the Italians themselves, however, endeavour to justify it in their conversations with strangers, and Baretti has of late years published a formal vindication of it to the world. In this vindication he has not only deduced the original of it from pure Platonic love, but would willingly persuade us that it is still continued upon the same mental principles ; a doctrine which the world will hardly be credulous enough to swallow, even though he should offer more convincing arguments to support it than he has already done.

IF the French women are remarkable for a national pride, which induces them to look with a mixture of pity and contempt upon
every

every female who is unfortunate enough to belong to any other country, the Italians are not less remarkable for a family pride, which instigates them to despise, as beings beneath their notice, every one who cannot reckon up a long line of illustrious ancestors; and indeed they often behave as if they were persuaded, that a descent of this kind conferred upon them a dignity and worth, which all their own worthless insignificance could not possibly stain or destroy. The Spaniards carry this family pride even farther than the Italians, and the Germans, perhaps, still farther than they. It is a remainder of Gothic barbarity, wherever we meet with it, and one of the most certain appendages of narrow and little minds. Viewing it in this light, some have confined it almost entirely to the female sex: but its limits are not so circumscribed; in almost every country, it diffuses itself in a greater or less degree even among the men; but it reigns triumphant in the ideas of the women, supplies the want of personal merit, and too often betrays itself in every look and in every action of their lives. In other respects the women of Italy approach nearer to the French, than those of any of the European kingdoms; they are not quite so gay and volatile, nor do they so much excite the organs of risibility; but by the softness of their language, and their manner, they more forcibly engage the heart: they are not so much theameleon or the weathercock, but have some decent degree of permanency in their connections, whether of love or friendship; not, like the French, careless and divested of jealousy, but often suffering it to transport them to the most unwarrantable actions.

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As we have almost in every other particular characterised the women of Italy, in our sketches of those of France, we shall now pass.

Spanish women, their character,

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pass on to Spain; a country which, though almost in our neighbourhood, we are less acquainted with, and less able to give the proper character of its inhabitants, than of the Hottentots, or Indians on the banks of the Ganges; a circumstance owing to the Spaniards having formerly almost totally shut up their country from the intrusion of strangers; and from the genius of some of the most modern travellers, who, in passing through it, have hardly deigned to take notice of any thing that was not stamped at least with the rust of a thousand years. From the little, however, which we learn of the travellers who have visited Spain, that people have no great reason to boast of the security in which they suppose they have placed the chastity of their women, by the assistance of locks, bars, and old duennas. Chastity cannot be properly secured but by virtue, and virtue never yet was instilled by force. The Spaniards have at last attained sensibility enough to see this: their locks and bars are falling into disuse, and their women do not become less chaste; and whatever may be the conduct of particulars, when we view them as a nation, they rank much higher in this respect than either the French or Italians, though not so high as some of the other nations of Europe. A Spanish lady of rank discoursing with some of her countrymen on gallantry, said, that she would heartily despise the man, who, having a proper opportunity, did not strenuously solicit every favour she could grant. Every Spanish woman reckons this a tribute due to her charms; and though she has no inclination to grant all the favours that a man can ask of her, she is not the less affronted if he does not ask them.

THERE is in the Spaniards a native dignity and pride, which far surpasses that of any other nation; which, though the source
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of many inconveniencies, has nevertheless this salutary effect, that it sets them above almost every species of meanness and infidelity. Nor is this a quality peculiar to the men; it diffuses itself in a great measure among the women also; and its effects are visible, both in their constancy in love and in friendship, in which respects they are the very reverse of the French women. Their affections are not to be gained by a bit of sparkling lace, or a tawdry set of liveries; nor are they to be lost by the appearance of still finer. Their deportment is rather grave and reserved; and, on the whole, they have much more of the prude than the coquette in their composition. Being more confined at home, and less engaged in business and in pleasure, they take more care of their offspring than the French, and have a becoming tenderness in their disposition to every thing but heretics.

THE Spaniards are indulgent almost beyond measure to their women, and there are several situations in which they take every advantage of this indulgence. A kept mistress has, by indisputable custom, a right to a new suit of clothes, according to the quality of her keeper, as often as she is blooded; and it is only feigning a slight illness, and being on a proper footing with the Doctor, to procure this as often as she pleases. A lady to whom a Cavallero pays his addresses, is sole mistress of his time and money; and should he refuse her any request, reasonable or capricious, it would reflect eternal dishonour upon him among the men, and not only ruin his suit, but make him the detestation of all the women. But in no situation does their character appear so whimsical, or their power so conspicuous, as when they are breeding. In this case, whatever they long for, whatever they ask, or whatever they have an inclination to do, they must be indulged in. Some even of the
lowest

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lowest station have taken it into their heads to see the king, have sent to him, and he has gratified their curiosity. But this whimsical indulgence is sometimes used improperly; for it has been known, that young men who could not gain admittance to the wives of others, whom they wanted to debauch, have dressed themselves like women with child, and in this disguise carried on their intrigues unsuspected.

General ob-
servations on
the European
women.

IT would greatly exceed the limits we have prescribed to ourselves, were we to give a minute detail of the character and conduct of the women in every country of Europe; we shall therefore confine our subject to a few observations of a more general nature than those we have just now exhibited. Though the Germans are rather a dull and phlegmatic people, and not much addicted to the warmer passions, yet at the court of Vienna they are much given to intrigue; and an affair of this kind is so far from being scandalous, that a woman gains credit by the rank of her gallant, and is reckoned silly and unfashionable, if she scrupulously adheres to the virtue of chastity. But this, as well as some things which have been related above, it is hoped, is more the manners of courts, than of places less exposed to temptation, and consequently less dissolute; and we are well assured, that in all the nations we have mentioned, there are many women who do honour to humanity, not by chastity only, but also by a variety of other virtues.

THE greatest part of the other European nations, not having yet arrived at that point in the scale of politeness, where nature begins to be discarded, and religion obliterated, their women are of course less the votaries of the Cyprian goddess. In Great-

Britain, most parts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Prussia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Russia, chastity is still a fashionable virtue, and the other female virtues attend in her train. Indelicacy is not substituted for wit, nor are double entendres almost ever heard from the lips of any female above an oyster-wench or a prostitute. Some women, indeed, of the higher ranks in England have of late set scandal at defiance, and laughed at character : but they have commonly found themselves engaged in an unequal contest ; the lash of scandal has made them smart, in spite of their seeming indifference ; and their want of a good character has excluded them almost from every company, and of course from more than half the joys of life. Their pernicious example is, however, in our opinion, not widely diffused. Our women are, in general, chaste and delicate ; and while we do not give improper countenance to those who have acted otherwise, will continue to be so. But should the unhappy period ever arrive, when our men shall not distinguish between her who is virtuous, and her who is not, the character we have here given of our women will no longer exist, and we shall have ourselves to blame for having destroyed it.

BUT besides the virtues of modesty and chastity, in which the women of Europe far surpass all others, they are not less distinguishable for many other good qualities both of the head and of the heart. It is in some of the politer European nations only, where we meet with that inexpressible softness and delicacy of manners, which, cultivated by education, appears as much superior to what it does without it, as the polished diamond appears superior to that which is rough from the mine. In all other parts of the world, women have attained to so little knowledge, and so little

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consequence, that we can only consider their virtues as of the negative kind. In Europe they are of another nature ; they consist not only in abstinence from evil, but in doing good : we see women every day exerting themselves in acts of benevolence and charity, in relieving the distressed of the body, and binding up the wounds of the mind ; in reconciling the differences of friends, and preventing the strife of enemies ; and, to sum up all, in that care and attention to their offspring, which is so necessary and essential a part of their duty.

BUT, as impartial historians, we hold not up the fair side of the picture only, but shall turn to the other also. This less lovely side, however, we shall present to our female readers, without any of the flourishes of the declaimer, or the sarcastical sneering of the satirist ; being fully sensible, especially when we address ourselves to the softer sex, that a reproof is half lost, where ill-nature is joined ; and having only in our view, the improvement of their understandings, and leading them by gentle arts to those paths of rectitude and decorum, from which some of them have deviated.

THOUGH we have declared it as our opinion, that there is in most parts of Europe more female virtue than in any other place on the globe, yet even here, we find women liable to a variety of foibles and failings. As chastity is so highly valued in almost all the nations of our continent, we meet often with women who are foolish enough to persuade themselves, and endeavour to persuade the world, that the possession of it can atone for the want of every other thing amiable and virtuous ; and if any one is hardy enough to hint at their faults, they answer with no small severity, in the cant phrase, “ I am an honest woman, at least.”

THERE

THERE is amongst us another female character, not uncommon, which we denominate the outrageously virtuous. Women of this stamp never fail to seize all opportunities of exclaiming, in the bitterest manner, against every one upon whom even the slightest suspicion of indiscretion or unchastity has fallen; taking care, as they go along, to magnify every mole-hill into a mountain, and every thoughtless freedom into the blackest of crimes. But besides the illiberality of thus treating such as may frequently be innocent, you may credit us, dear countrywomen, when we aver, that such a behaviour, instead of making you appear more virtuous, only draws down upon you, by those who know the world, suspicions not much to your advantage. Your sex are in general suspected by ours, of being too much addicted to scandal and defamation; a suspicion, which has not arisen of late years, as we find in the ancient laws of England a punishment, known by the name of ducking-stool, annexed to scolding and defamation in the women, though no such punishment nor crime is taken notice of in the men. This crime, however, we persuade ourselves, you are less guilty of, than is commonly believed: but there is another, of a nature not more excusable, from which we cannot so much exculpate you; which is, that harsh and forbidding appearance you put on, and that ill-treatment, which you no doubt think it necessary, for the illustration of your own virtue, you should bestow on every one of your sex who has deviated from the path of rectitude. A behaviour of this nature, besides being so opposite to that meek and gentle spirit which should distinguish female nature, is in every respect contrary to the charitable and forgiving temper of the Christian religion, and infallibly shuts the door of repentance against an unfortunate sister, willing, perhaps, to abandon the vices into which heedless inadvertency had plunged her, and

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from which none of you can promise yourselves an absolute security.

WE wish not, fair countrywomen, like the declaimer and satirist, to paint you all vice and imperfection, nor, like the venal panyrist, to exhibit you all virtue. As impartial historians, we confess that you have, in the present age, many virtues and good qualities, which were either nearly or altogether unknown to your ancestors; but do you not exceed them in some follies and vices also? Is not the levity, dissipation, and extravagance of the women of this century arrived to a pitch unknown and unheard-of in former times? Is not the course which you steer in life, almost entirely directed by vanity and fashion? And are there not too many of you, who, throwing aside reason and good conduct, and despising the counsel of your friends and relations, seem determined to follow the mode of the world, however it may favour of folly, and however it may be mixed with vice? Do not the generality of you dress, and appear, above your station, and are not many of you ashamed to be seen performing the duties of it? To sum up all, do not too, too many of you act as if you thought the care of a family, and the other domestic virtues, beneath your attention, and that the sole end for which you were sent into the world, was to please and divert yourselves, at the expence of those poor wretches the men, whom you consider as obliged to support you in every kind of idleness and extravagance? While such is your conduct, and while the contagion is every day increasing, you are not to be surpris'd if the men, still fond of you as playthings, in the hours of mirth and revelry, shun every serious connection with you; and while they wish to be possessed of your charms, are so much afraid of your manners and conduct, that
they

they prefer the cheerless state of a bachelor, to the numberless evils arising from being tied to a modern wife.

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WE shall conclude this chapter with a few general observations on the characteristic differences of the past and present ages of the world. Such, among many, is the proclivity to admiring whatever is past, and despising whatever is present, that every thing stamped with the rust of remote antiquity must infallibly be all good and virtuous, and every thing of a modern date as unquestionably be vice and folly. According to such, the times of the patriarchs were the best and happiest periods of the world, even so much so, that they were distinguished by the splendid title of golden age, while our modern times are branded with the epithet of the age of iron. To give us some idea of this golden age, many authors of considerable merit have laboured to persuade us, that the earth brought forth her fruit spontaneously, that the lion and the tyger were harmless as the lamb, and that mankind, free from pride, ambition, avarice, and all the vicious and tumultuous passions of the mind, lived in the most happy security and simplicity; and some have even gone so far as to represent these times as exempted from those infirmities to which nature, folly, and climate, have always subjected humanity. These and other fables of the like nature, though they may do credit to the song of the poet, disgrace the record of the historian; but in forming our judgment of past events, we are not to be directed by the poet, the declaimer, the panegyrist, nor the satirist; we must listen to facts only, and we must also consider the general complexion of the times in which they happened.

Difference
between the
past and pre-
sent times.

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SUCH authors as we have mentioned would make us believe, that avarice and ambition were unknown to the happy beings they have placed in the first ages of the world ; but all that remains of the history of these ages, teaches quite another doctrine, and demonstrates that, almost from the remotest antiquity, there were wars, entered into with the most flagrant injustice, and carried on with the most shocking inhumanity ; murders and robberies constantly committed, and the most wanton cruelties often executed without any provocation ; that brother cheated in the most solemn manner his brother ; that the fair sex were maltreated and abused ; and in fine, that a savage barbarity of manners subjected every thing to superior strength. They would likewise persuade us, that pomp and luxury were then altogether unknown ; but these are only comparative, not absolute terms ; as what might well deserve the name of luxury in one period, would be the utmost simplicity in another. We grant indeed, that those elegant pleasures which are the result of knowledge, industry, and a perfection of the arts, had then no existence ; but they had a pomp and a luxury proportioned to their powers, and the means they had of shewing them, and in these they exerted, nay even overstretched themselves perhaps as much as in our modern times, as we shall see more fully in the sequel of this work. Let us then no longer continue to ascribe so many chimerical virtues to those ages, when the plainness and simplicity of manners which then prevailed, was evidently owing more to their rude and uncultivated state, than to their better principles ; and when the virtues for which they are celebrated, were more of the negative than the positive kind.

THOSE abandoned cities which were consumed by fire from heaven, need not be brought as examples of the total corruption
of

of ancient manners. We have unhappily too many other proofs of it, and of these the diffidence that every one then entertained of his neighbour, is not the weakest. Abraham and Isaac, both apprehended that they should be slain for the sake of their wives; and it was no uncommon thing for a man to require an oath of his neighbour that he would do him no harm. The stories of Judah and Tamar, his daughter-in-law, and of the rape of Dinah, give us some idea of the debauchery and injustice which then reigned upon the earth. Judah condemned Tamar to suffer death for the crime that he had committed with her, and the perfidious sons of Jacob slew the Sechemites after they had ratified a treaty of peace with them in the most solemn manner. Nor were fidelity and honour more respected in private than in public life; Jacob bargained with his uncle to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel; when the service was accomplished, Laban shamefully imposed upon him Leah, and had even the effrontery to justify what he had done, and exact another seven years service for Rachel. Jacob deceived his brother Esau; the sons of Jacob sold Joseph their brother as a slave; an old prophet, by a pretended commission from the Lord, decoyed a brother prophet to his house, and made him eat bread and drink water, contrary to the commandment that had been given him, and for the disobedience of which he was slain by a lion. Such were mankind in the patriarchal ages.

WHEN we trace their character through the subsequent periods mentioned in the Old Testament, we meet with a numerous list of the same enormities and crimes. When from this sacred record, we turn towards the traditions and fragments of the history of other nations, they give us no more favourable idea of these

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these primitive times; from them we learn, that men lived at first without government, and without law, without mutual confidence, or mutual friendship; passion and appetite dictated what they should do, and they were not solicitous about the justice, but only about the convenience and utility of their actions. The whole of the political history of ancient Egypt is a scene of slaughter and injustice. The cruelty and other crimes of Semiramis excite our indignation, and the mad exploits of Alexander, were they not so much marked with blood, would almost excite our laughter. The heroic ages of Greece exhibit little besides rape, murder, and adultery; and the subsequent periods are full of tyranny, proscription, and oppression.

THE Romans were at first a set of lawless banditti; after they had formed themselves into a community, and peopled Rome, they became famous for moderation and justice, wherever the concerns of their republic were not in question, and at last turned the most venal and profligate of mankind. When the Roman empire was destroyed, were the crimes of the people extirpated; or does history paint mankind as meliorated by so great an event? The reverse we are afraid is the case; gloomy superstition now started up, persecution stalked terrible behind her, and drenched Europe in blood. Rome erected a spiritual, when she had lost a temporal, authority, and indiscriminately trampled on the rights of heaven and earth; scarcely was there a nation among us, whose roads were not infested with gangs of lawless assassins, who robbed and murdered the traveller as he went along, and the laws were too feeble to bring these, or even single offenders, to justice. Nor was a man's own house even an asylum, where his life and property could be secure; his stronger neighbour

neighbour often entered it in the night, and bereaved him at once of property and of life. Such was the picture of Europe till the beginning of the sixteenth century, when, by a variety of causes, which it is not our province to enumerate, the manners began to soften, justice to triumph over oppression, and the whole to assume that order and security in which we now behold it.

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Of the Influence of Female Society.

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OF all the various causes which tend to influence our conduct and form our manners, none operate so powerfully as the society of the other sex. If perpetually confined to their company, they infallibly stamp upon us effeminacy, and some other of the signatures of their nature; if constantly excluded from it, we contract a roughness of behaviour, and slovenliness of person, sufficient to point out to us the loss we have sustained. If we spend a reasonable portion of our time in the company of women, and another in the company of our own sex, it is then only that we imbibe a proper share of the softness of the female, and at the same time retain the firmness and constancy of the male.

WOMEN in all ages have set the greatest value on courage and bravery in the men; and men, in all civilized ages and countries, have placed the chiefest female excellence in beauty, chastity, and a certain nameless softness and delicacy of person and behaviour. The cause of this will unfold itself in considering the nature of the different sexes. Women, in themselves weak, timid, and defenceless, stand in the greatest need of courage and bravery, to defend them from the assaults that may be made on their bodies, or advantages that may be gained over their minds; men, on the other hand, enterprising and robust, have the greatest need of female softness, to smooth their rugged nature, to wear off the as-

perities they daily contract in their business and connections with one another, and by the lenient balm of endearment, to blunt the edge of corrosive care.

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WE have just now observed, that men secluded from the company of women, become slovenly in their persons, and rough and untractable in their manners; but this is not all, even their gait assumes a more uncouth appearance, and their voice a hoarser and less musical tone; their sensations become less delicate, their sentiments less religious, and their passions seem to have more of the brutal, than those of the rest of their sex; circumstances which appear but too conspicuous in sailors, miners, and other people who either spend the greatest part of their time altogether without women, or in the company of such as have lost every female excellence. Should it be alleged, that these alterations are owing to the horrid trade of war, in which sailors are so often engaged, the same thing should then be observed in soldiers. Should we have recourse to the furliness of the winds and waves, against which they maintain a perpetual combat, though these may in some measure account for their behaviour, yet it will appear to an accurate observer, that the ultimate cause is to be found only in the want of that social intercourse with the other sex, which of all things has the most powerful tendency to soften and humanize the mind.

Effects of the
company of
women.

THOUGH men secluded from the company of women, become the most rude and uncultivated of animals, yet women almost entirely secluded from the company of men, do not, in some particular cases, lose almost any thing of their softness and delicacy. In nunneries, for instance, we often persuade ourselves, that these

Women lose
not their
softness when
excluded from
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qualities rather increase; but here we are to consider, that women so placed, are not altogether excluded from the company of men, having frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with them through a grate; and besides, the melancholy reflections on the sweets of society, of friendship, and above all, of love, which they have for ever lost, give them an air of pensive softness, which never fails to make the sex appear more lovely, and to raise our pity, a passion which, we may say, when it has beauty for its object, is more than sister to love, and inspires us with the strongest partiality.

Contrast a
roughness
when con-
stantly with
men.

BUT though women who are shut up by themselves preserve their native softness and delicacy, yet those of them, who, abandoned by, or despising the company of their own sex, associate only with ours, soon become the roughest and most uncultivated of the human species; a fact which the experience of every one must have abundantly demonstrated to him, and which affords the strongest possible proof of the salutary influence of female society. But in order to shew more particularly the benefits arising from this source, let us take a short view of the state of society among the ancients, and then turn our eyes towards those countries, where, at present, men and women live almost constantly separated from each other, and where the men seldom or never deign to visit the women but to shew their authority, or to gratify animal appetite.

View of so-
ciety in the
early ages.

WHEN we look back to the more early ages of antiquity, we find but little social intercourse between the two sexes, and that, in consequence thereof, both were less amiable in their persons and manners. In the patriarchal ages, it would seem, that the women
generally

generally resided by themselves, in apartments allotted to them in the back-parts of the tents of their parents and husbands ; a custom long after continued, and in some places at this day observed, among the descendants of the patriarchs ; the effects of which, on the tempers and dispositions of the men, and even upon those of the women, were apparent. Neither of the sexes were lively nor cheerful ; the men were cruel, gloomy, treacherous, and revengeful ; the women, in a lesser degree, shared all these unsocial vices. Many ages elapsed after the times we are speaking of, before women arose into consequence enough to become the companions of an hour devoted to society, as well as of that devoted to love. Even the Babylonians, who appear to have allowed their women more liberty than any of the ancients, seem not to have lived with them in a friendly and familiar manner ; but the little intercourse the sexes had with each other, being still greater than that of the neighbouring nations, they acquired thereby a polish and refinement unknown to any of the people who surrounded them. The manners of both sexes were softer, and better calculated to please, and to cleanliness and dress they paid more attention. Such were the effects of female society on the Babylonians ; but they had not carried it far enough to become properly cultivated. The Sybarites, who had carried it by much too far, in a series of years lost by it, all that firmness of body and of mind peculiar to the men, and contracted, if we may be allowed the expression, a more than female effeminacy.

WHAT a rude and barbarous people the Greeks were, during the heroic ages, we have already seen : when we trace them downward to those periods in which they became famous for their knowledge of the arts and sciences, we find their rudeness but a
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little altered, and their manners softened only a few degrees; it is not therefore arts, sciences, and learning, but the company of the other sex only, that forms the manners, and renders the man agreeable. But the company and conversation of that sex, as we have before related, was among the Greeks shamefully neglected; and particularly among the Lacedemonians, who on that account were the most rude and uncivilized of all their neighbours. In their more early periods, the Romans were scarcely behind the Greeks in rudeness and barbarity; but they were some time a community without women, and consequently without any thing to soften the ferocity of male nature. The Sabine virgins, whom they had stolen, appear to have infused into them the first ideas of politeness; but as they spent the greatest part of their time in the field, or in the Forum, and in general did not make companions of their wives and daughters, it was many ages before the roughness of the warrior, and clownishness of the farmer, began to give place to the politeness of the gentleman; a revolution of manners, which did not begin to shew itself till about the time when the Cæsars assumed the empire; and from that time the intercourse between the sexes became so easy, and gallantry grew so much into fashion, that the hardy Roman was at length softened down to the delicate voluptuary.

THE same causes existed among the nations contemporary with the Romans, and they produced the same effects. None of the fierce inhabitants of the North had either time or inclination for the company of their women; and on that account they were destitute of ornaments and graces, and equally uncultivated in body and in mind. Were we to proceed on our survey of antiquity, we should find, that it was only a few centuries ago that the fair
sex

sex began in Europe to be considered in a rational light. Before the introduction of chivalry, they were looked upon as beings unworthy of the company or attention of the men: by that institution they were raised to the rank of divinities, approached with reverence, and considered as moving in a sphere too exalted for the familiarity of mortal men; and it was only upon the decline of this romantic turn of mind, that they began to take that place in the scale of rational beings, for which nature seems to have intended them; to be social companions, to enhance the value of all the pleasures, and alleviate all the pains and ills, of life.

FROM this flight survey of antiquity, let us turn our eyes towards the present state of mankind in the East; where jealousy, that tyrant of the soul, has excluded all the joys and comforts of mixed society: there, we shall not only find the men gloomy, suspicious, cowardly, and cruel, but divested of almost all the finer sentiments that arise from friendship and from love. There, we shall find, that roughness and barbarity have settled their empire, and triumph over the human mind: but there, shall we hardly be able to discover the tender parent, or the indulgent husband; there, shall we with difficulty find any of the social virtues, or the sentimental feelings: all these are commonly the offspring of mixed society; and though men may improve their heads in the company of their own sex, we may affirm, that the company and conversation of women alone is the proper school for the heart. Should any one doubt the truth of this, let him turn over a few volumes of the history of any of these nations, where the sexes live excluded from each other, and he will meet with the most ample conviction.

State of the
Easterns.

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WHEN from these unsocial regions, where, by being deprived of the company of the fair, life is deprived of more than half its joys, we turn ourselves to Europe, we easily discover, that in proportion to the time spent in the conversation of their women, the people are polished and refined; and less so, in proportion as they neglect or despise them. The Russians, Poles, and even the Dutch, pay less attention to their females than any of their neighbours, and are of consequence less distinguished for the graces of their persons, and the feelings of their hearts. The Spaniards, when they formerly had not the benefits of female society, were remarkable for their cruelties: at this period, when locks, bars, and duennas are becoming unfashionable, and women mixing among them, they are fast assuming the culture and humanity of the neighbouring nations. So powerful, in short, is the company and conversation of the fair, in diffusing happiness and hilarity, that even the cloud which hangs on the thoughtful brow of an Englishman begins in the present age to brighten, by his devoting to the ladies a larger share of time than was formerly done by his ancestors.

BUT if we would contemplate the influence of female society in its greatest perfection, we must take a view of the Italians and French; in the last of which, we are constantly presented with tempers so gay and cheerful, that we are almost tempted to think them superior to all the ills and accidents of life: among them only we find happiness smiling amid want and poverty, and pleasure and amusement, with all their sportive train, not only attending on the rich and affluent, but on the humble villager, and dancing around the rustic cot. For this fortitude of the French in supporting their spirits through all the adverse circumstances of this world, for their vivacity and cheerfulness of temper,

per, various reasons have been assigned, as the lightness of their food, and salubrity of their air ; causes to which a great deal may be justly attributed, but which are undoubtedly much assisted in their operations by the constant mixture of the young and old, and by the levity and sprightliness of female conversation ; for we scruple not to assert, that this vivacity of the French ladies, and the constant attendance paid them by the men, are the chief causes why the cares and ills of life sit lighter on the shoulders of that fantastic people, than on those of any other country in the world.

IN all other countries, the men make excursions, and form parties of pleasure, by themselves : The French reckon that an excursion is dull, and that a party of pleasure cannot deserve that name, without a mixture of both sexes join to compose it. The French women do not even withdraw from the table after meals ; nor do the men discover that propensity to have them dismissed, which we so often meet with in England, and which is a certain indication, that they either want to debauch themselves with liquor, or indulge in those indecencies of discourse, which the company of women always restrains. It is alleged by those who have no relish for the conversation of the fair sex, that their company curbs the freedom of speech, and restrains the jollity of mirth ; but if the conversation and the mirth are decent, and the company are capable of relishing any thing but wine, the very reverse is the case ; at least, it is always remarkably so among the French : nor is any thing more natural ; for, the fair sex in general being less disturbed by the cares and anxieties of life, are not only themselves more cheerful, but more eager to promote mirth and festivity.

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Advantages
of female so-
ciety.

BUT the advantages of female society are not altogether confined to the circumstances we have now related; they extend themselves much farther, and spread their influence over almost every custom and every action of social life. It is to the social intercourse with women, that the men are indebted for every effort they make to please and be agreeable; and it is to the ambition of pleasing they owe all their elegance of manners, as well as all the neatness and ornaments of dress. It is to the same cause, also, that they frequently owe their sobriety and temperance, and consequently their health; for to drunkenness and irregularity nothing is so effectual a check, as the company of modest women; inso-much that it is but seldom we find a man so lost to shame, as to get drunk when he is in, or to go into their company. To them we are not less frequently indebted for the calming of violent disputes, and preventing of quarrels, which, with every other species of rudeness, are happily reckoned so indecent in their presence, that we often postpone them till another opportunity; and in the interim, reason resumes the rein which passion had usurped. But this is not all: many disputes and quarrels, already begun, have been amicably settled by the interposition of their good offices, or, at least, the fatal effects of them prevented by their tears and mediation. Fond of the softer scenes of peace, they have often had the address to prevent, by their arguments and intercession, the direful effects of war; and, afraid of losing their husbands and relations, they have sometimes rushed between two hostile armies ready to engage, and turned the horrid scenes of destruction into those of friendship and festivity.

IN our sex, there is a kind of constitutional or masculine pride, which hinders us from yielding, in points of knowledge or of honour,

honour, to each other. Though this may be designed by nature for several useful purposes, yet it is often the source also of a variety of evils, the most dangerous to the peace of society : but we lay it entirely aside in our connections with women, and with pleasure submit to such dictates and behaviour from their sex, as from our own would call up every irascible particle of our blood, and inflame every ungovernable passion. This accustomed submission gives a new and less imperious turn to our ideas, teaches us to obey where we were used to command, and to reason where we used to be in a passion ; to consider as only good-breeding and complaisance, that which before we looked upon as the most abject and unbecoming meanness : and thus the stern severity of the male is softened and rendered agreeable by the gentleness peculiar to the female nature. Hence we may rest assured, that it is the conversation of virtuous and sensible women only, that can properly fit us for society ; and that, by abating the ferocity of our more irascible passions, can lead us on to that gentleness of deportment, distinguished by the name of humanity. The tenderness we have for them softens the ruggedness of our nature ; and the virtues we assume, in order to make a better figure in their eyes, sometimes become so habitual to us, that we never afterward lay them aside.

WE are aware, that in this country it is too much the fashion to suppose that books, and the company of men only, are necessary to furnish every qualification requisite for the scholar and the gentleman ; but we would desire such as are of this opinion to compare the generality of the gentlemen of this country, to those of France and Italy, and they will find, that though we perhaps excel them in deepness of thought and solidity of judg-

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ment, we are greatly their inferiors in urbanity, in address, and knowledge of the world: for though books may furnish proper ideas, and experience improve the understanding, it is only the company and acquaintance of the ladies, which can bestow that easiness of address by which the fine gentleman is distinguished from the mere scholar, and man of business. The French and Italians educate their nobility in the drawing-room, at the toilette, and places of public amusement, where they are constantly in the company of women. The English educate theirs at the college, and at Newmarket, where books, grooms, and jockies, are their only companions: the former are often the most fantastical of beings; the latter, the most ignorant, imperious, and surly: something between these two extremes of education; while it preserved the dignity and firmness of the man, might infuse a proper quantity of the softness and address of the woman.

WHEN we look a few centuries backward to these periods, when, even in Europe, there was but little intercourse between the two sexes, we find that the men were hardly ruder in their manners than in their persons; they wore long beards, which totally covered the chin, and often hung a great way down the breast. Beards are the work of nature, and however troublesome and uncouth, had no moral turpitude, nor tendency to debauch the manners; but the men had, in those times, other modes of dressing which violated every idea of decency. As the ladies began to have more influence, beards were mutilated down to mustachoes, though the learned exclaimed against the horrid innovation, as discovering a taste which tended more to gratify the women, than to keep up the dignity of the masculine countenance; and though the church considered the mutilation as little
short

short of apostacy, because Moses and Jesus were always painted with long beards. As the gentlemen found that the ladies had no great relish for mustachoes, which were the relics of a beard, they cut and curled them into various fashions, to render them more agreeable; and at last finding that such labour was in vain, gave them up altogether. But as the gentlemen of the three learned professions were supposed to be endowed with, or at least to stand in need of, more wisdom than other people, and as the longest beard had always been supposed to sprout from the wisest chin, to supply this mark of distinction, which they had lost, they contrived to smother up their heads in enormous quantities of frizzled hair, that they might bear the greater resemblance to an owl, the bird sacred to wisdom and Minerva. Such professional wigs, however, were long an object of the ridicule of wits, and the dislike of the women, who, to the honour of their taste and influence, have, in the present age, banished by far the greater part of them.

MAN, secluded from the company of women, is not only a rough and uncultivated, but a dangerous, animal to society; for, in such a situation, the animal appetite is daily gathering strength, till at last it becomes almost quite ungovernable; a fact well known to the inhabitants of sea-ports, who have too frequent opportunities of seeing the force of that ungovernable passion, with which sailors returned from a long voyage, commonly dedicate themselves to the worthless women who attend on account of their money. And a fact which also appears evident from the conduct of the men in all countries, where women are kept as the miser does his gold: in such countries, the passions of the men are so raised by partial glances, and by brooding over the thoughts of ideal beauty, and ideal happiness, in the enjoyment of it, and so in-
flamed

flamed with almost insurmountable obstacles to that enjoyment, that if they ever happen to find a woman alone, they attack her in the most furious and licentious manner; nor have the women here such a power of resistance as they have in countries where they are accustomed to the company of the men; secluded from them by a barbarous custom, they naturally form notions of the happiness they would derive from them, of the most wild and romantic nature: these notions disarm their virtue, and make them fall an easy prey to the first rude invader. From this cause it happens, that, in spite of cautious parents, and jealous husbands, and of locks, bars, and eunuchs, the chastity of the women is less secure in such countries, than where the sexes live free and easy together: we may therefore assert, that the benefits of mixed society are not confined to the men alone, but extend to the women also; infuse into their minds a power of checking the attacks of insolence, and by making man the object of their daily converse, make him less valuable, and consequently less dangerous, either to their virtue or their happiness; and we may further aver, that this society teaches the men to regulate and govern their passions with greater propriety, as nothing can be more certain, than that rape, adultery, and every evil that follow them, are more common in countries where the sexes live separate, than where they enjoy the company of each other.

THERE is nothing by which the happiness of individuals and of society is so much promoted, as by constant efforts to please; and these efforts are in a great measure only produced by the company of women; for men, by themselves, relax in almost every particular of good-breeding and complaisance, and appear the creatures of mere nature: but no sooner does a woman appear,
than

than the scene is changed, and they become emulous to shew all their good qualifications. It is by the arts of pleasing only, that women can attain to any degree of consequence or of power ; and it is by pleasing only, that they can hope to become objects of love and affection ; attainments which, as they are of all others the most dear to them, prompt them to cultivate most assiduously the arts of pleasing ; arts for which they are well qualified by nature. In their forms lovely, in their manners soft and engaging, such are they by nature and by art, that they can infuse by their smiles, by their air and address, a thousand nameless sweets into society, which without them would be insipid, and barren of sentiment and of feeling. But to enjoy any pleasure in perfection, we must never be satiated with it ; and therefore it requires more than common prudence in a woman, to be much in company, and still retain that deference and respect which we would voluntarily pay to her, were we seldomer indulged with her presence. A few centuries ago, women were rarely accessible, but, shut up in houses and castles, lived retired from the bustle of the world. When they deigned to shew themselves, they were approached as divinities : a transient view of them often set the heart on fire ; and their smiles conferred a happiness, and raised an enthusiastic ardour, of which at this period we can hardly form any idea. By degrees, as manners became more free, and the sexes mixed together with less ceremony, women began to be seen with less trepidation, approached with less deference, and sunk in their value as they became objects of greater familiarity. Nor was this peculiar to the times we are delineating : the same effect always has, and always will happen from the same cause ; let the other sex, therefore, learn this instructive lesson from it, that half the esteem and veneration we shew them, is owing to their.

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their modesty and reserve, and that a contrary conduct may make the most enchanting goddesses degenerate in our eyes to a mere woman, with all the frailties of mortality about her. The forward beauty, whose face is known in every walk, and in every public place, may be given as a toast, and have her name inscribed on the windows of a tavern, but she rarely ever becomes an object of esteem, or is solicited to be a companion for life.

WE shall conclude what we had to say on the advantages of female society, by observing, that it seems not only to be the cause of the rise and progress of polite manners, and of sentimental feelings, but also of the fine arts. When we view the countries where women are confined, we find the inhabitants of them distinguished for barbarity of manners; when we view the same countries in the periods when the women begin to have their liberty, we immediately perceive the manners begin to soften and improve. In no country can this be more strongly exemplified than in Spain; they had formerly less communication with the fair sex than any other people of Europe, and were consequently greatly behind all of them in politeness and elegance of manners; but since their women have been under less restraint, the progress of manners has been so rapid, that they are hardly behind any of their neighbours. To the society of women we are indebted for the emulation of pleasing, and conferring happiness on others; and to this emulation we certainly owe the greater part, if not the whole of the fine arts. If any one doubts of this, let him consider the condition of these countries, where men have no such motive of emulation, and let him there discover the fine arts if he can; he may indeed say, that in the East he finds some of those arts in as great perfection as in Europe; but he discovers also, that they have

existed there time immemorial, without the least advance or improvement; and why? because the Eastern has no motive to render him emulous of pleasing; has he a rival in love, he is under no obligation to succeed in preference to him by shewing preferable accomplishments; does he court a coy fair, who shews reluctance in accepting of him, he is not desirous to gain her affections by good offices, and by inventions to render her life easy and comfortable, but at once buys her of her sordid parents or relations. Widely different is the case in Europe; women of sense judge of the men by the elegance of their persons, of their manners, and by their intellectual faculties; hence the men have constantly occasion to shew all these to the best advantage, and hence, even the fine arts, which we cultivate to please and to render us amiable, may be rationally considered as an effect of female society and of love.

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WERE we inclined to write the panegyric, instead of the history of the fair sex, we might enumerate several other advantages arising from their company and conversation; but, contenting ourselves with what we have already related on this head, we shall now mention some of the disadvantages arising from our intercourse with them. By the learned and studious, it has often been objected to female company, that it so enervates and relaxes the mind, and gives it such a turn for trifling, levity, and dissipation, as renders it altogether unfit for that application which is necessary in order to become eminent in any of the sciences. In proof of this they allege, that the greatest philosophers seldom or never were men who enjoyed, or were fit for the company or conversation of women. Sir Isaac Newton hardly ever conversed with any of the sex, and it is believed, died at last as much a stranger

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to the joys of love, as he had lived a stranger to the fair objects that awaken it in the heart; Bacon, Boyle, Des Cartes, and a variety of others, conspicuous for their learning and application, were but indifferent companions to the fair. Whether these, and many more instances of the same nature which might be adduced, are sufficient to establish a general rule, we pretend not to determine. Nothing however seems more certain, than that the youth who devotes his whole time and attention to female conversation and the little offices of gallantry, never distinguishes himself in the literary world; but without the fatigue and application of severe study, such a man often obtains by female interest, what is denied to the merited improvements acquired by the labour of many years.

BUT besides this idleness and neglect of study, so much complained of as a consequence of the company of women, such company also often leads the men into a scene of expensive amusements, into a love of finery and ostentatious show, which they are not able to afford; while regardless of every thing but to please the giddy and unthinking fair, they rush forward with thoughtless unconcern on the ruin of their fortunes, and awake not from their dream of folly till they find themselves plunged into poverty, become the jest of their acquaintances, and even perhaps sneered at by the very females who led them into the snare. Against such weakness we sincerely wish to caution the young and unexperienced part of our sex, and we advise them to be careful how they associate with any of the other, who are not endowed with sense as well as virtue; for it is not always to vicious, but frequently to gay and thoughtless women, that men owe their ruin.

SUCH

SUCH as are enthusiastically zealous for the liberties of mankind, have imagined that the only way to continue a brave, free, and independent people, is to avoid as much as possible the company of women, the soft strains of music, and all the luxuries of the table and of dress; and as a proof of their opinion, they tell us, that the Lydians, the Sybarites, and even the hardy Romans themselves, were debauched, and at length lost their liberty by their attention to women.

THAT all these people were greatly debauched in their manners, history has left us no room to doubt; but that the company of women was the cause of this debauchery, is far from being certain; at least if we take a view of the world as it exists in the present period, it teaches us a different lesson; it points out to us, in the most clear and distinct manner, that liberty and independence, the most inestimable blessings of mankind, are no where at so low an ebb, as in the countries where the women have no political influence, and where the men keep almost no company with them: it shews us, that the men of such countries, instead of being the bravest and most independent, are the most dastardly and enslaved of the human race; and that on the contrary, in the wilds of America, where liberty and independence exist in the most extensive sense of the words, the freedom which the women enjoy in mixing with, and in some places even of governing along with the men, has not in the least contributed to destroy these native rights of mankind. That in Europe, where liberty is generally founded on social and rational principles, calculated for the good of the community, the company of the women has not hitherto so enervated the men as to induce them to part with it, rather than rouse themselves from the lap of indolence and ease. About two

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hundred and fifty years ago, when Francis the First had not introduced women to court, the French were not half so much in the company of their women as at present, and yet were not then a more free and independent people; on the contrary, though we suppose them to have been sinking in effeminacy ever since that period, we have seen them at different times make such efforts against arbitrary power as have rather increased than diminished their privileges. Were the Italians less slaves to their princes, and to the see of Rome in former times, when they were scarcely employed in any thing but arts of superstitious devotion, than at present, when they almost entirely resign themselves to music and to women? Or were the Spaniards more free under the gloomy reign of Philip the Second, when, from motives of jealousy and religion, their women were constantly locked up, than they are at present when they converse with them? In short, wherever we meet with a nation of slaves, other causes besides the company of their women must have contributed to bring them into, and to continue them in, that despicable state.

Influence of
particular
women.

SUCH are the general influences of female society; the particular influence which every woman of an agreeable person, and a tolerable share of good sense, has over every man, we cannot pretend minutely to describe; a task of this kind would be better executed by some female, versant in the exercise of such a power. When we consider the two sexes into which the human genus are divided, it appears in the most conspicuous manner, that the Author of nature has placed the balance of power on the side of the male, by giving him not only a body more large and robust, but also a mind endowed with greater resolution, and a more extensive reach. But are these qualities altogether without their counterpoise?

poise? Are women left without any thing on their side to balance this superiority of our nature? Have they no powers to exert, whereby they can reduce this seeming superiority to a more equal footing? If they have not, they may justly complain of the partiality of nature, and the severity of their lot. But let us attentively consider this matter, and we shall find, that the Author of our being is no such partial parent: we shall discover, that to each sex he has given its different qualifications; and that these, upon the whole, when properly cultivated and exerted, put men and women nearly on an equal footing with each other, and share the advantages and disadvantages of life impartially between them. To bend the haughty stubbornness of man, he has given to woman beauty, and to that beauty has added an inexpressible softness and persuasive force both of words and actions, which but few of the sex themselves know the extent of, and which still fewer of ours have the power of resisting. Thus, an insinuating word, a kind look, or even a smile, often conquered Alexander, subdued Cæsar, and decided the fate of empires and of kingdoms; thus the intercession of the mother of Coriolanus saved the city of Rome from impending destruction, and in one hour brought about a happy event, which the senate and people had despaired of ever seeing accomplished. This power of the women, in bending the stronger sex to their will, is no doubt greatly augmented when they have youth and beauty on their side: but even with the loss of these it is not always extinguished; of which this last circumstance is an indubitable proof.

BUT this power of the women does not altogether consist in smiles, words, and actions; it often effects its purposes by means less visible, and impossible to be described: but these means must

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constantly have for their basis softness and good-nature ; they must ever be such as throw a veil over the pride of our supposed superiority, and make us believe, that we are exerting that sovereign power, which we consider as our right, when in reality we are yielding it up. The least appearance of the contrary alarms our pride ; and she who discovers to us her intention to govern by her power, or by her ill-temper, produces an effect on us the other sex are not sufficiently aware of, by raising a disgust, which all our efforts can never conquer, besides, for the most part, failing in her attempt. In short, such a conduct in a woman is the same thing as it would be in a lion to fight with his hinder legs, or for a hare to face about, and defy the teeth of the pursuing pack ; it is neglecting to make use of what nature has furnished, and endeavouring to use what she thought proper to deny.

WE could point out here, were it necessary, a great variety of instances, where women have governed men by the influence of good-nature and insinuating manners ; but we defy history to furnish one single instance of this ascendancy having ever been obtained over a man of sense, by brawling, ill-humour, and a visible contest for superiority. No man of feeling is proof against the softer arts of a sensible woman : such arts are armed with an irresistible power. Every man, almost, is proof against her open attacks ; they are the attacks of a bee without a sting. The daughter of Sesostris prevailed upon him by the arts of persuasion to undertake the conquest of the world : Atossa, the wife of Darius, by the same means engaged him to carry an expedition he had planned against the Scythians, into Greece. In the empire of the Mogul, where women have in general but little influence, Noor-Jehan, a favourite Sultana, prevailed on the emperor her husband to

delegate almost the whole of the sovereign power into her hands. But a much more noble instance of the exertion of female influence occurs in the queen of Pythius, a prince of Lydia; who, cruel and avaricious beyond measure, kept the greater part of his subjects so constantly employed digging in the gold mines, that they had no time for agriculture, and were consequently in danger of perishing by famine. Oppressed by this tyranny, they took an opportunity of his being abroad, and assembled in great numbers, with tears in their eyes, to lay their complaints before his queen; who, commiserating their condition, after much revolving in her mind how to relieve them, bethought herself of the following method. On the return of her husband, she ordered a magnificent entertainment to be served up to him; but to his great surprise, when he uncovered the dishes, none of them contained any thing but gold. Sensible at once of his misconduct, and struck with the propriety of the method his wife had made use of, in order to open his eyes, that he might see his folly, and fully convinced that gold could not satisfy his own hunger, nor save his subjects from famine, he immediately gave orders that, in future, no more than one-fifth part of them should be employed in procuring gold from the mines, and that the other four parts should betake themselves to agriculture and the useful arts.

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It would be easy to multiply instances, both ancient and modern, of this ascendancy which women of sense have gained over men of feeling; but we shall confine ourselves to a few. Among these, the empress Livia may justly claim the first notice; having attained such an influence over her husband Augustus, that there was hardly any thing he could refuse her. Many of the married ladies of Rome being anxious to know the means that she had used

to

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to attain this end, one of them at last venturing to ask her, she replied, “ By being obedient to all his commands ; by not endeavouring to discover his secrets ; and by concealing my knowledge of his amours.” Henry the Fourth of France, one of the greatest and most amiable of princes, affords a most remarkable instance of the power women may, by gentle methods, acquire over the men. Tender and compassionate in his nature, he could hardly refuse any thing to softness, intreaties, and tears : sensible at the same time, and jealous of his honour and power, there was hardly any thing he would grant, when attempted to be forced from him by different methods. Hence he was constantly governed by his mistresses, and at variance with his wives. The Salique law ordains, that the crown of France shall never fall to the distaff : but the French women have amply revenged themselves for this affront ; by contriving to govern almost every monarch, they have constantly governed that great kingdom, from the apparent management of which the law had so positively excluded them.

FROM scripture, and from education, almost every man has imbibed an idea of the superiority of his own sex ; he is therefore zealous to maintain that superiority, and jealous of every attack made upon it ; but he is at the same time endowed with a sentimental tenderness for the other sex, and a strong inclination to promote their happiness ; which, with regard to them, may be called his weak side, and which women of sense easily discover, and as easily take the advantage of. This being the state of things between the two sexes, nothing seems more plain, than that though men govern by law, women may almost always govern by the arts of gentleness and soft persuasion. “ The empire of woman (says a French author) is an empire of sweetness, address,
“ and

“and complaisance ; her commands are careffes ; her menaces are tears ;” and we may add, that the power of fuch commands and of fuch menaces is like that of faith, which can remove mountains : it is a power which has nature on its fide ; the principle by her implanted within us, pleads in favour of the fex, and more than half performs the task of making us obey all the commands they lay upon us, when they are laid with gentlenefs of manners, and an infinuating behaviour. But though men of fenfibility and good-nature may infallibly be governed by foftnefs and addrefs, there are others caft in a rougher mould, whofe hearts are ftrangers to the finer fenfations, and whofe ftubborn feelings bend not even to prayers and intreaties. Women joined to fuch may fit down in filence and deplore their misfortune ; a misfortune which it is beyond their power to remedy ; for we have but too good reafon to affirm, that the temper, upon which gentlenefs and good-nature are loft, can never be mended by ill-nature. Men of fenfe will often, for the fake of peace, fubmit to be ill-treated by a woman ; men deftitute of fenfe will retort that treatment with double violence.

C H A P. XV.

*Sketches of Ceremonies and Customs, for the most part observed only
by Women.*

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AS the manners and customs of a nation, besides being the most entertaining part of its history, serve also to characterise and distinguish it from all others, by pointing out the various pursuits to which the genius of its people are directed; the whims and caprices which climate, chance, or necessity has introduced; the force that the intellectual powers have exerted, in contriving or adopting ceremonies and customs agreeable to reason; in resisting superstition, and discarding whatever is ridiculous in manners, unbecoming in religion, or tyrannical in government; so the customs more peculiar to women, were we enabled by history to give a particular detail of them, on comparing them with those of the men, would greatly assist us in forming a judgment of the comparative merit of the two sexes, in discovering the solid and the flimsy of each, and pointing out which is most directed, in its various pursuits and pleasures, by reason; and which most follows the dictates of custom, or suggestions of fancy.

Obscurity of
this subject.

BUT, unhappily, of all other parts of the female history, that of their manners and customs is involved in the greatest obscurity: almost all the writers of antiquity have either passed over them in silence, or blended them so intimately with the ceremonies

nies and customs of the men, that we are generally at a loss to discover, with any degree of certainty, what is peculiar to each. Nor is the subject much better elucidated by the moderns, who, in their voyages and travels, for the most part, only inform us of the dress, complexion, and behaviour of the women in the countries they have visited; which, indeed, is commonly all that is in their power; for their ignorance of the language of the people they are describing, precludes them from every species of information, but what they receive by their eyes. The jealousy of the men, in many places, hinders them from all access to their women; and the short stay made by a traveller affords not the necessary time for information. Hence, among the present inhabitants of the globe, we have but imperfect sketches of what is peculiar to the one sex, and what to the other.

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It has been observed by all who have attentively considered human nature, that fashion and custom are powers which exercise the most extensive authority over weak and little minds, either because such are not properly qualified to examine the causes from which they arise, nor the effects of which they are productive; or because, after having examined and found them ridiculous, they have not fortitude enough to prefer singularity to custom, though the former be founded on reason, and the latter on folly or caprice: and as women in all ages have been supposed to be more the slaves of fashion, ceremony, and custom, than men, this slavery has constantly been made use of to prove the weakness and inferiority of their understandings. We allow, indeed, that if the fact were established, the proof would be undeniable: but we think it is far from being established; for we challenge any man of sense and impartiality to look around him into the fashions and customs of

Both sexes
equally sub-
ject to the
power of cus-
tom.

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Europe, and to say whether those of our sex are not as whimsical and ridiculous as those of the other, and whether our whole deportment does not declare, that we are as inviolably attached to them.

As the subject of female ceremonies and customs is of the most delicate nature, and requires to be touched by the softest pencil, it may on that account have been the more generally passed over in silence; and on that account, also, we find ourselves obliged to run over it more slightly than is consistent with the nature of historical information. But we lay it down as a rule, that we would rather stop something short of the information we could give, than offend the most delicate ear. As the subject of ceremonies and customs is so intimately connected with several of those of which we have already treated, and shall hereafter have occasion to treat in the course of this work, we shall here only mention a few of those which appear the most remarkable, and which are either altogether, or for the most part, practised only by women.

Bewailing of
virginity.

ONE of the earliest ceremonies peculiar to the sex, which we meet with in history, is the bewailing of virginity. This was practised among the Israelites, Phœnicians, and several of the neighbouring nations, by all women who were obliged to relinquish life before they had entered into the state of wedlock; or who, by any particular vow being devoted to perpetual celibacy, were, in consequence of that vow, cut off from all hopes of enjoying the sweets of love, or of raising up posterity. These last not only continued through life, at stated times, to deplore the unhappiness of their own fate, but, on some occasions, assembled their female friends and relations, to assist them in performing the
mournful

mournful ceremony. It is supposed, that the reason why the Israelitish virgins bewailed their virginity, was, because every woman flattered herself with the hope of being mother to the Messiah that was to come: but among the neighbouring nations, the custom must have originated from other causes; but what these were, it is impossible for us now to discover: we can only conjecture, that as a numerous posterity was reckoned, among the ancients, one of the greatest blessings, and a particular mark of the divine favour, that she who was excluded from a possibility of this blessing, and of this distinguishing favour, might on these accounts suppose herself peculiarly wretched.

BESIDES this ceremony of bewailing virginity, there is another, perhaps not less ancient, which was likewise practised by the women of Israel, of Phœnicia, and also by those of Greece and of some other nations: this was the annual lamentation for the death of Adonis, or, as the scripture calls him, Thammuz, performed by the Phœnician women, on the banks of the river Adonis, and by those of other nations, in their cities and houses: but before we proceed to describe this ceremony, we think it necessary to give some account of its origin.

Ceremony of
mourning for
the death of
Adonis.

ADONIS, according to some of the ancients, was a most beautiful boy; Venus on this account admired him so much from his earliest infancy, that she wished to have him educated according to her own mind, and therefore committed the care of him to Proserpine. When he was grown up to a man, Venus demanded him as her right, but Proserpine, who by this time had also become fond of him, refused the demand; upon which a violent dispute arose between the two goddesses, which, after long altercation,

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cation, was at last referred to the decision of Jupiter. On hearing both parties, Jupiter decreed, that he should spend one-third of every year with Proserpine, another with Venus, and during the remaining third, should dispose of himself according to his own inclination. Adonis, having spent his portion of the year with Proserpine, went to Venus, and being greatly captivated with her charms, she had the address to detain him the whole remaining part of it; upon which Diana, who was also desperately in love with him, and had flattered herself that he would come and live with her that third part of the year in which he was at liberty, being highly affronted at the preference he had given to Venus, in the first transport of her resentment, sent a wild boar to destroy him.

ACCORDING to others, Adonis being an incestuous child, begot by Cynarus king of Cyprus on his own daughter, was on that account exposed on the mountains, and nourished by the nymphs, where Venus accidentally seeing him, fell so much in love with him, that Mars, jealous of the growing connection, transformed himself into a wild boar and slew him. Others again say, that while he was hunting in the Idalian grove, a boar which he was pursuing, turned upon him, and tore him to pieces; that Venus, commiserating his fate, transformed him into a flower of a bloody colour, and called it by his name; or that being unspeakably grieved for the loss of her paramour, and resolving that she would not tamely relinquish her hopes, she followed him to the shades below, and, demanding him of Proserpine, at length so far succeeded, as to prevail on her infernal majesty to allow him to return and spend one half of every year with her upon earth; which having accomplished, she joyfully ascended from the shades, and relating her
success

ſucceſs to her companions, inſtituted a feſtival in memory of having brought back from the regions of the dead, the ſwain whom ſhe adored.

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SUCH are the ſtories related of Adonis, and ſuch is ſaid to have been the inſtitution of the ceremonies with which he was honoured. But though the occaſion of this inſtitution, as well as every other thing that has been handed down to us concerning him, bears the moſt indubitable marks of fable; yet that there was ſuch a perſon as Adonis, and that ceremonies were performed by the women of ſeveral nations, to commemorate his untimely death, and extraordinary reſtitution to life, the ſacred and profane hiſtory of antiquity have equally contributed to confirm.

THE Phœnician women performed the ceremonies ſacred to Adonis in the following manner. Through their country runs the river of Adonis, the channel of which is, for many miles towards its ſource, a kind of red earth; this earth tinges its waters of a bloody colour, as often as it is waſhed down from its banks and the adjacent country by the rain. Superſtition, inſtead of attributing this to the natural cauſe, ſuppoſed that the waters were at theſe times tinged with the blood of Adonis, or rather that they put on that bloody appearance, to expreſs their ſorrow for the tragical exit he made upon their banks. This appearance was therefore reckoned a ſignal by the gods, appointing the proper time for the celebration of the rites inſtituted to call to remembrance that exit. Accordingly the women, at this ſignal, aſſembled on the banks of the river, and began their lamentations, which were of the loudeſt and moſt lugubrious nature, and ſuch as they commonly uttered upon the loſs of their moſt near and dear relations.

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tions. The lamentations ended, they disciplined themselves with whips, then offered a sacrifice, and on the day following, pretending that Adonis was revived, and had ascended through the air to the upper regions, they shouted for joy, shaved their heads, and obliged all who would not comply with this custom to prostitute themselves in the temple of Venus, as a recompence to that goddess, for having neglected a part of the ceremony sacred to the memory of her beloved paramour.

THE women of Byblus also performed the first part of this ceremony with mourning and lamentation, during which the priests of Osiris in Egypt wrote to them that they had found the god whom they were seeking, sent the letter in a small ark made of papyrus, which is said to have gone by sea of its own accord, and performed its voyage in seven days. As soon as it arrived in the port, the women who were met together to mourn and to lament, changed the scene to dancing, feasting, and rejoicing, because he was found alive whom they had mourned as being dead.

THE Israelitish women also celebrated these rites ; for Ezekiel tells us, that on being brought to the door of the Lord's house, he saw their women weeping for Thammuz. They are supposed to have observed them in the following manner. They laid an image of Adonis on a bed, and having for some time lamented over it, a light was brought in by the priest, who anointed the mouths of the mourners, and whispered to them that salvation was come, that deliverance was brought to pass ; upon which the image was taken as from a sepulchre, and they rejoiced at its restitution to life, with a joy no less extravagant than their sorrow had been on account of its death.

THESE mysteries were also celebrated by the Greeks, in the following manner : All their cities put themselves into mourning, coffins were exposed at every door, the statues of Venus and Adonis were carried in procession, with all the pomp and ceremony practised at funerals, the women tore their hair, beat their breasts, and counterfeited all the actions and gestures usual in lamenting the dead. Along with the procession were carried shells filled with earth, in which were raised several sorts of herbs, especially lettuces, in memory of Adonis being laid out by Venus upon a bed of lettuces. After this a sacrifice was offered, and the following day spent in expressing their joy, that Proserpine, at the solicitation of Venus, had consented to allow Adonis to return from the shades to the regions above.

CEREMONIES and customs, even though they are of a religious nature, like all other things, are frequently obliterated by devouring time ; such, however, is not the fate of that we have been now describing. It is said that it still exists in some places of the Levant, with little variation from the manner in which it was practised by the ancient Greeks.

DEITIES, whether they were supposed to be of the masculine or feminine gender, were generally worshipped indiscriminately by both sexes ; but to this rule there were some few exceptions. Among the Syrians there was a female deity called the great Syrian goddess, who seems chiefly to have been worshipped by priests, who had emasculated themselves, to render them fit for her service, and by frantic women. In spite of every pretension to the contrary, we must all be sometimes sensible of a natural partiality to that sex to which we belong, and feel ourselves prone

Good goddess
worshipped
only by wo-
men.

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to excuse its faults and pity its infirmities, as incidents to which we ourselves are more liable. Among people therefore, who suppose that their deities, like themselves, are of different sexes, it will be impossible not to suppose them also susceptible of the different propensities and feelings of those sexes: hence nothing could be more natural than for women to address themselves to, and imagine they would be more readily heard by, a female deity than a male; and hence arose among that sex, the peculiar worship and adoration they paid to some of the goddesses. Juno, otherwise called Lucina, who had herself felt the pains of child-bearing, and was on that account supposed to be more susceptible of feeling for those in a like condition, was constituted the patroness of lying-in women, and by them constantly invoked to procure a safe and easy delivery. Vesta, because she had always retained her virginity, was on that account supposed to be a proper patroness for chastity, and therefore worshipped in a temple at Rome, and in some other countries by virgins only. But of all the kinds of adoration paid by women to a female deity, that of the Roman ladies to the good goddess, seems the most unaccountable and extraordinary, as it originated, so far as we know, from no particular cause, and tended to no particular purpose, as it was conducted with the utmost secrecy, and scrupulously concealed from the eyes of every thing of the masculine gender.

As early as the birth of the Roman republic, it had been customary for the women, at the expiration of every consular year, to celebrate, in the house of the consul or prætor, certain religious rites and ceremonies in honour of the good goddess; but what these ceremonies were, or how conducted, we can give no account, as no man was ever allowed to be present at them, and no

man

man was ever made acquainted with their nature and tendency. All we can say is, that when the time appointed for celebrating these rites came, the Vestal virgins repaired to the house appointed for that purpose, and offered sacrifices to the good goddess; but the sacrifices offered, and the manner of offering them, were secrets which to this day remain impenetrable, and strongly contradict the common opinion, that no secret is safe in the breast of a woman.

OUR own times furnish us with an instance of a ceremony from which all women are carefully excluded*; but the Roman ladies, in performing the rites sacred to the good goddess, were even more afraid of the men than our masons are of women; for we are told by some authors, that so cautious were they of concealment, that even the statues and pictures of men and other male animals were hoodwinked with a thick veil. The house of the consul, though commonly so large that they might have been perfectly secured against all intrusion in some remote apartment of it, was obliged to be evacuated by all male animals, and even the consul himself was not suffered to remain in it. Before they began their ceremonies, every corner and lurking-place in the house was carefully searched, and no caution omitted to prevent all possibility of being discovered by impertinent curiosity, or disturbed by presumptive intrusion. But these cautions were not all the guard that was placed around them; the laws of the Romans made it death for any man to be present at the solemnity.

* Masonry.

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The wor-
shippers in-
truded upon
by Clodius.

SUCH being the precautions, and such the penalties for insuring the secrecy of this ceremony, it was only once attempted to be violated, though it existed from the foundation of the Roman empire till the introduction of Christianity; and this attempt was made, not so much perhaps with a view to be present at the ceremony, as to fulfil an assignation with a mistress. Pompeia, the wife of Cæsar, having been suspected of a criminal correspondence with Clodius, and so closely watched that she could find no opportunity of gratifying her passion, at last, by the means of a female slave, settled an assignation with him at the celebration of the rites of the good goddesses. Clodius was directed to come in the habit of a singing-girl, a character he could easily personate, being young and of a fair complexion. As soon as the slave saw him enter, she ran to inform her mistress. The mistress, eager to meet her lover, immediately left the company, and threw herself into his arms, but could not be prevailed upon by him to return so soon as he thought necessary for their mutual safety; upon which he left her, and began to take a walk through the rooms, always avoiding the light as much as possible. While he was thus walking by himself, a maid-servant accosted him, and desired him to sing; he took no notice of her, but she followed and urged him so closely, that at last he was obliged to speak. His voice immediately betrayed his sex; the maid-servant shrieked, and running into the room where the rites were performing, told that a man was in the house. The women, in the utmost consternation, threw a veil over the mysteries, ordered the doors to be secured, and with lights in their hands, ran about the house searching for the sacrilegious intruder. They found him in the apartment of the slave who had admitted him,

drove him out with ignominy, and, though it was the middle of the night, immediately dispersed, to give an account to their husbands of what had happened. Clodius was soon after accused of having profaned the holy rites; but the populace declaring in his favour, the judges, fearing an insurrection, were obliged to acquit him.

IN a country where the women were less regarded than at Rome, and where less confidence was reposed in their probity and honour, the men would probably have supposed, that ceremonies so carefully concealed from their knowledge were either inimical to virtue, or to the state. But that no such suspicions were entertained by the Romans, we learn from Cicero, who, speaking of these mysteries, says, “What sacrifice is there so ancient, as that which has been handed down to us from our first kings, and is coeval with Rome herself? What sacrifice is there so private and secret, as that which is concealed, not only from the eyes of the curious and inquisitive, but from the sight of all men, and where neither the most profligate wickedness nor impudence ever yet presumed to enter? This sacrifice no man except Clodius was ever so impious as to violate; no man but Clodius ever thought, without the utmost horror, of assisting at it. This sacrifice, which is performed by the Vestal virgins, which is performed for the prosperity of the Roman people, which is performed in the house of the chief magistrate, celebrated with unknown ceremonies, and in honour of a goddess, whose very name to know is sacrilege; this sacrifice Clodius profaned.”

IN subsequent periods, it has been alleged by some, that whatever opinion the Romans themselves entertained of the rites and ceremonies

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monies performed in honour of this good goddess, they must have been at least of an indelicate nature; else why all this care and solicitude of the women to conceal them from the men? But we think it is more natural, as well as charitable, to suppose, that as the Romans had a deity to preside almost over every particular circumstance and action, this good goddess must either have been considered as the patroness of the sex in general, or the particular patroness of some of their affairs and concerns; and that on this account the women imagined nothing could be so acceptable to her, as rites and ceremonies performed only by that sex, and for the prosperity of those affairs which she patronised.

THIS being probably the case, we have the strongest reason to suppose, that the worship of this goddess was not in the least inconsistent with decency of manners, or modesty of character. But this was not the case every where; in other countries, there were rites performed by the women incompatible with either; such were those of the women in the temple of Venus, those of the priests and priestesses of Cybele. Such were the mad and licentious revelries in honour of Bacchus; such are the frantic gesticulations and howlings of the women of California, while sacrificing to their idols; and such also are the dances of the women of modern Egypt, and of some other places which we have already described.

Ceremonies
of the Jewish
women.

IN the religion of the modern Jews, there are some ceremonies peculiar to their women, at the commencement of their sabbath, which is on the Friday evening at half an hour before the sun sets. Every conscientious Jew must have a lamp lighted in his
house,

house, even though he should borrow the oil of his neighbour. The lighting of these lamps is a kind of religious rite, invariably assigned to the women, in order to recal to their memory the crime by which their original mother first extinguished the lamp of righteousness, and to teach them, that they ought to do every thing in their power to atone for that crime, by rekindling it. Instead of the scape-goat, which this people formerly loaded with their sins, and sent into the wildernesse, they now substitute a fowl. Every father of a family takes a white cock, and the mother of the family a white hen, which she strikes upon the head, repeating at every stroke, "Let this hen atone for my sins; she shall die, but I shall live." This done, she twists her neck, and cuts her throat, to signify, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. If a woman, however, happens to be pregnant at the time of this ceremony, as she cannot ascertain whether the infant is a male or a female, that its sins, of whatever gender it be, may not be unexpiated, she takes both a hen and a cock, that she may be assured of having performed the ceremony as required by their law.

IN the religions of the present times, and particularly that of christianity, which teaches us, that the Supreme Being is the common and impartial father and governor of both sexes, there are but few ceremonies peculiar either to the men or to the women; we shall therefore only take notice of one more, which is practised by the women of Chinese Tartary, assisted by their Bonzes, or priests, who turn the credulity of the sex to their own emolument. In many places of this country, there are assemblies of women, who, to the number of ten or fifteen, meet together at stated times, and out of this number annually elect a directress of their society.

An

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An aged Bonze presides at the meeting, and sings anthems in praise of the god Fo. On their more solemn days, they adorn the house where they meet with many images and grotesque paintings, representing the miseries and torments of the damned. These meetings continue for seven days, during which they employ themselves in laying up treasure for the world to come: this consists of a little paper house, which having painted and gilded, they fill with a great number of paper boxes varnished and painted; in these they deposit pieces of paper formed into the shape of ingots, and done over with gold or silver leaf; of which several hundreds are supposed necessary to redeem the soul from the cruelties and tortures which Gen-vang, the king of hell, inflicts on those who have nothing to bribe him into lenity. The rest, as well as the house which contains them, are designed to procure the soul a comfortable lodging, with such victuals and drink as are necessary in the other world.

EVERY thing thus prepared, to the doors of these paper houses the women fasten paper padlocks, and lock them with paper keys; and when the lady who was at the expence of building that destined for herself dies, the survivors meet, and with great solemnity burn the whole; imagining in the next world she shall find, that from its ashes her house has arisen with every thing in it for her use; only the paper ingots, instead of remaining what they were, turned into gold or silver, according to the metal with which they were gilded.

Ceremonies
in mourning
peculiar to
women.

WHEREVER politeness has stamped a real value upon beauty of features and elegance of person, there is hardly any circumstance powerful enough to induce the fair sex to injure, or even for a time

time to submit to have the lustre of either the one or the other eclipsed : but where these natural advantages scarcely entitle the possessor to any superior attention or regard, they are of consequence cultivated with less assiduity, and preserved with less solicitude. Women, in the politer countries of Europe, even when obliged to dress themselves in the weeds of sorrow and affliction, never lose sight of the idea of appearing lovely, and usually contrive matters so, as that even their weeds may add something to their charms, by giving them a languishing and melancholy air ; circumstances which often render beauty more irresistible, than when it is arrayed in all the tinsel glare of show, and frippery of fashion. The women in the ruder ages of antiquity, and those of many modern nations, into whose plan of life elegance and politeness have not yet entered, in the melancholy moments dedicated to mourning, regardless of every thing but the custom of their country, or rather, perhaps, of the impulses of their heart, not only eclipse the present lustre of their charms, but, by the wounds and flashes which they make upon their bodies, cruelly deface them for ever.

It was throughout all antiquity a prevailing opinion, that no offended deity would grant forgiveness without blood ; hence almost every people upon earth stained the altars of their gods with the blood of human or of more ignoble victims. But blood was not only necessary to appease a god when offended, it was also the most effectual means of rendering him propitious, and procuring from him any favour ; and hence, almost in every nation, those who approached a deity to ask any particular favour of him, mangled and tore their own flesh, as the surest method of obtaining their request. Nor was it their deities alone, which the an-

Origin of women wounding themselves in mourning.

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cients supposed were delighted with blood; the ghosts, also, of their deceased relations approaching in their separate state nearer to the nature of these deities, likewise resembled them in this particular. It is therefore not improbable, that the custom of wounding and tearing the flesh in mourning, was first introduced to appease the ghosts of deceased friends; to supplicate them for some particular favour; to shew them how much they were loved and lamented by those whom they had left behind them on earth; or to feast them with human blood, upon which they were supposed by the Greeks and some of the neighbouring nations to regale themselves with a peculiar pleasure. But from whatever cause this custom proceeded, we are well assured that the women of Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Greece, and perhaps of many other nations, mangled and disfigured themselves by wounds, on the death of their friends and relations.

BUT this custom was not peculiar to antiquity; it has been handed down even to our times. In Otaheite, and in several of the other islands around it, the women, either in compliance with the custom of their country, or rather, perhaps, when the idea of some departed friend stole into their memory, though in the height of a fit of jollity and mirth, immediately assumed the appearance of the deepest sorrow, wounded their heads with the tooth of a shark, till the blood ran down their faces; and as soon as the ceremony was ended, or perhaps the idea of the departed friend drove out by another of a more pleasureable nature, the transition from sorrow to joy was as instantaneous as it had before been from joy to sorrow.

THIS

THIS ceremony, however, of our modern savages, although cruel in its nature, and unavailing in its consequences, is only of a short duration, and gives but little interruption to the more cheerful sensations. But the mourning of the Grecian women was long, and, while it lasted, struck out of existence every thing that could be called joyous or amusing. They not only beat their breasts, and tore their faces with their nails, but also divested themselves of all their ornaments, laid aside their jewels, their gold, and whatever was rich and precious in apparel, sequestered themselves from company, and refused all the comforts and conveniences of life, shunned the light as odious, and courted dark shades and melancholy retirement : they also tore or cut off their hair, and either cast it into the funeral pile, to be consumed along with the body of the person for whom they mourned, or into the tomb, to be buried along with it. Cutting off the hair was not, however, an invariable custom. Some ran about with it dishevelled, clothing themselves in the coarsest garments, throwing dust upon their heads and faces, and even sometimes prostrating themselves upon the earth, and rolling in the dust ; customs which seem to have been practised from the earliest antiquity, as expressive of the deepest sorrow and affliction.

BESIDES the ceremonies already mentioned, the women in ancient times, as directed by fancy or instigated by regard, decked the tombs of their deceased friends ; they hung lamps upon them, and adorned them with a variety of herbs and flowers ; a custom at this time observed by the inhabitants of Constantinople and its neighbourhood, who not only adorn the tombs of their dead, but plant their burying-grounds with rosemary, cypress, and other odouriferous shrubs and flowers ; but whether with a view to please the

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manes of the dead, or preserve the health of the living, is uncertain. There were other ornaments besides these we have now mentioned, used by the women of antiquity to deck the tombs. Among the Greeks, the tomb of a deceased lover was frequently hung round with locks of the hair of his mistress. They likewise made offerings, and poured out libations to the ghosts, whom they supposed to smell, to eat, and to drink as they did while upon earth. This was not only a prevailing opinion among the ancients, but has not as yet been totally obliterated. It is still believed by the Chiriguanes; and at Narva, one of the principal towns of Livonia, they celebrate a remarkable festival sacred to the manes of the dead. On the eve of Whitsuntide, the women assemble in the church-yard, and spreading napkins on the graves and tombstones, cover them with a variety of dishes of broiled and fried fish, custards, and painted eggs; and to render them more agreeable to the ghosts, the priest, while he is praying over them, perfumes them with frankincense, the women all the time howling and lamenting in the most dismal manner, and the intelligent clerk not less assiduously employed in defrauding the ghosts, by gathering up all the viands for the use of the priest.

Instances of
rejoicing for
the dead.

THERE are few, if any customs that have been more generally diffused among mankind, than that of mourning for the dead; and there are few nations where the women have not, either from custom or the tenderness of their nature, acted a principal part in these mournings. There are, however, some nations, who, instead of reckoning death a subject of lamentation, rejoice at it, as a happy deliverance from pain and adversity; and others, who, though they commonly mourn at the death of their friends and relations, rejoice at it when attended with particular circumstances.

Thus

Thus the Greek and Roman fathers, and, what is more extraordinary, even the mothers, rejoiced when their sons fell in the defence of their country ; and thus the Christians, in several periods and countries, rejoiced when their friends, being put to death by persecutors, were numbered among those who were reckoned worthy of the crown of martyrdom. Thus also the women of modern Egypt, though on other occasions they lament over the dead with the most dismal outcries, when a Sheick departs this life, demonstrate the most extravagant joy and satisfaction, because, say they, a Sheick must, at death, infallibly enter into the paradise of the blessed.

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BESIDES these ceremonies of religion and of mourning which the women have appropriated to themselves, there are others observed by them, which, arising from their nature, and the circumstances attending it, may, for that reason, be denominated sexual. In Chirigua, when a girl arrives at a certain age, her female relations inclose her in a hammoc, and suspend it at the end of her cottage. Having remained in this hammoc for one month, they let it down half way, and at the end of another month, the neighbouring women assemble, and having armed themselves with clubs and staves, enter the cottage in a frantic manner, striking furiously upon every thing within it. Having acted this farce for some time, one of them declares that she has killed the serpent which had stung the girl, upon which she is liberated from her confinement, the women rejoice for some time together, and then depart every one to her own home. Among some of the Tartarian tribes, when a girl arrives at the same period of life, they shut her up for some days, and afterward hang a signal on the top of her tent, to let the young men know that she is become marriageable.

Sexual ceremonies of women.

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riageable. Among others of these tribes the parents of the girl make a feast on this occasion, and having invited their neighbours, and treated them with milk and horse flesh, they declare that their daughter is become marriageable, and that they are ready to dispose of her as soon as a proper opportunity shall offer. In Circassia and Georgia, where parents are sometimes obliged to marry their daughters while infants, to prevent their being violently taken from them by the rich and powerful, the circumstance of a girl being arrived at the time of puberty, is frequently concealed for some time, as the husband has then a right to demand her, and the parents perhaps think her too young for the matrimonial state.

AMONG the circumstances which give rise to these customs which we have called sexual, child-bearing is one of the most particular. As in child-bearing some little assistance has generally been necessary in almost all countries; to afford this assistance, the women have commonly employed midwives of their own sex. The Athenians were the only people of antiquity who did otherwise. They had a law which prohibited women and slaves from practising physic: as midwifery was accounted one of the branches of this art, many lives had been lost, because the delicacy of the women would not submit to be delivered by a man. A woman called Agnodice, in order to rescue her countrywomen from this difficulty, dressed herself in the habit of a man, and having studied the art of physic, revealed herself to the women, who all agreed to employ no other. Upon this the rest of the physicians, enraged that she should monopolize all the business, arraigned her before the court of Areopagus, as having only obtained the preference to them by corrupting the
chastity

chastity of the wives whom she delivered. This obliging her to discover her sex, the physicians then prosecuted her for violating the laws of her country. The principal matrons of the city, now finding her in such danger, assembled together, came into the court, and petitioned the judges in her favour. The petition of the matrons was so powerful, and the reasons which they urged for having employed her, so conducive to the preservation of female delicacy, that a law was made, allowing women to practise midwifery. The sex availed themselves of this law, and the assistance of the men soon became quite unfashionable.

AMONG the Romans, and the Arabians, who after them cultivated the science of medicine with great assiduity, the women, in cases of difficulty, sometimes submitted to be delivered by a man; but this was far from being a matter of choice or a general practice: nor was it till the latter end of the last century, and beginning of this, when excess of politeness in France and Italy had begun to eradicate delicacy, that the sex began to give so much into the mode of being delivered by male practitioners; a mode which now so commonly prevails, that there is scarcely to be found in Europe, a woman so unfashionable as to be delivered by one of her own sex, if she can afford to pay for the assistance of a man.—How far the women may be safer in this fashionable way than in the other, we shall not take upon us to determine, but of this we are assured, that the custom is less consistent with delicacy.

IN ages unenlightened by science and philosophy, in moments so perilous to the sex as those of child-bearing, we are not surprised to find them using several ridiculous and unavailing me-

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thods to secure themselves from danger; but our astonishment is excited when we find that, in our own times, they are still the dupes of others not less inconsistent with reason and experience.

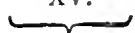
THE Greek and Roman women imagined that the palm-tree possessed a power of easing pain and facilitating labour; they therefore at these times grasped palm branches in their hands, and devoutly supplicated the goddess Lucina. The ancient Germans, destitute of more rational methods, placed all their hopes in magical girdles, which they tied about their women, and which, according to them, had the virtues of procuring immediate ease, and promoting a speedy delivery. But the power of these girdles did not terminate here, it extended even to the child as well as to the mother; and a son, born by their assistance, was undoubtedly to be brave, and a daughter to be chaste; hence such girdles were carefully kept in the repositories of kings and of other great personages. Till within these few years, some of them were to be met with in the families of the chieftains in Scotland. They were marked with many mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the women in labour, attended with certain mystical words and gestures, which only some particular women were supposed to understand; a circumstance by which it appeared that their pretended utility depended more upon magic, than on their intrinsic virtues. Every age and country has its peculiar follies and absurdities; ours has many nostrums to prevent the pain necessarily attendant on child-bearing, and they are just as well calculated to perform an impossibility, as the methods we have been now describing.

IN

IN some climates, where the constitution is relaxed by the heat, and at the same time not vitiated by these habits which in politer nations destroy mankind, women are said to be delivered with but little pain, and frequently without any assistance; nor is this singularity altogether peculiar to warm countries, but seems to depend more on living agreeably to nature, than on climate, or any other circumstance; for we have heard it asserted by several people who have been in Canada, that a savage woman, when she feels the symptoms of labour coming upon her, steals silently to the woods, lays herself down in a coppice, and is delivered alone; which done, she goes to the nearest river or pool, washes herself and the child, and then returns home to her hut.

WHILE ignorance and superstition disturbed the human mind with groundless terrors and apprehensions, it was a prevailing opinion over all Europe, that lying-in women were more subject to the power of dæmons and witches than people in any other condition, and that new-born infants, if not carefully watched and secured by ceremonies and spells, were frequently carried away by them: on this account various ceremonies and spells were commonly made use of; and even so lately as our times, we remember to have seen in the west of Scotland, a horse-shoe nailed upon the door, in an inverted manner, to secure a lying-in woman from the power of witchcraft. But this opinion was not confined to Europe; it pervaded at least half the globe. The Nogais Tartars are the particular dupes of it; when one of their women is in labour, the relations of the family assemble at her door, and make a prodigious noise by beating on pots and kettles, in order to fright away the devil, who, they suppose,

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would, if he did not find them on their guard, do some mischief to the mother or child, or to both.

Ceremonies
and customs
arising from
marriage.

BUT the time of lying-in is not the only period of human life in which evil spirits are supposed to have a more than ordinary power; they are imagined by many nations to have the same at the time of marriage. The Livonians make the sign of the cross with a naked sword upon the door of the bridegroom's house, and afterwards flick it in a beam over his head, as a charm to prevent the power of malignant spirits; and the bride on the same account, scatters red rags along the highways, and upon the graves of unbaptized infants.

IN countries where the virtue of the sex is supposed to be secured by their sense of moral rectitude, married women are under no particular restraint in the absence of their husbands; but in Hindostan, when the husband is from home, the wife must not appear chearful, must not eat delicate victuals, nor dress herself in fine cloaths, nor sit at the window of her apartment, nor in short do any thing but such as indicates sorrow and subjection. In France and Italy, the case is almost in every particular the reverse, and in England the ladies are too fast following the fashionable example.

IN Poland the women of middling condition are not allowed to marry, till they have wrought with their own hands three basketsful of cloaths, which they are obliged to present to the guests who attend them on their wedding-day. In Wallachia, the bride wears a veil on the day before, and on that of her marriage;

marriage; whoever unveils her is entitled to a kiss; but to prevent too much impertinence, the bride may in return demand a present, and the request must be complied with. The ancient Germans had, and their descendants continue to this day, a ceremony called Morgengabe, or morning gift, which the husband is obliged to present to the bride on the morning after their marriage, and which becomes her sole and absolute property, and she may dispose of it in her lifetime or at her death. Some traces of a like custom are to be met with among us, but it is here only voluntary, there it is enforced by a law. Formerly among the peasants of Britain, when a bride was brought to the door of the bridegroom's house, a cake was broken over her head, for the fragments of which the attendants scrambled: these fragments were laid under the pillows of the young men and maidens, and supposed to be endowed with a power of making them dream of their future wives and husbands.

IN Adrianople and the neighbouring cities, the women have public baths, which are a part of their religion and of their amusement, and a bride, the first time she appears there after her marriage, is received in a particular manner. The matrons and widows being seated round the room, the virgins immediately put themselves into the original state of Eve. The bride comes to the door richly dressed and adorned with jewels; two of the virgins meet her, and soon put her in the same condition with themselves; then filling some silver pots with perfume, they make a procession round the rooms, singing an epithalamium, in which all the virgins join in chorus; the procession ended, the bride is led up to every matron, who bestows on her some trifling presents, and to each she returns thanks, till she has been led round the

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whole. We could add many more ceremonies arising from marriage, but as they are for the most part such as make a part of the marriage ceremony itself, we shall have occasion to mention them with more propriety afterwards.

Miscellaneous
customs and
ceremonies.

OF all the passions which subvert reason and deform the mind, jealousy is the most credulously ridiculous, and in order to clear themselves from its suspicions, has subjected the fair sex to some of the most unaccountable expurgatory ceremonies. Such was that of the waters of jealousy of the ancient Jews, and such also was another of a similar nature practised by the Greeks, among whom, when a woman was accused of unchastity, a tablet with the form of an oath, which she was to take, written upon it, was hung about her neck; bearing it in this manner, she went into the water till it reached the calf of her leg, then she stood and solemnly repeated the oath, which, if false, the water, we are told, as if agitated with rage at her perfidy, swelled till it rose over the tablet, that it might cover from the sun the perpetration of so foul a deed; if true, it remained quiet, and the woman was cleared from all suspicion. Might not the ordeal trial, which was used for so many ages, and for the discovery of so many crimes, be a relic of this? But be that as it will, it was not founded upon more rational principles.

To trials of this kind the single as well as the married women were subject; but of the chastity of the latter there were other circumstances, which the Greeks reckoned the most convincing proofs. Pain and difficulty in bringing forth their young, are unavoidable evils, to which the females of all viviparous animals are more or less subject. But it was supposed by this people, that

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their

their gods, in commiseration of the case of a woman who was unjustly suspected of infidelity to her husband, wrought a miracle in her favour, by exempting her from these peculiar evils annexed to the lot of female life ; and she who brought forth a child without a sigh or a groan, and declared that she felt no pain, was in consequence accounted as chaste as Vesta. Hence it is obvious, that it only required a tolerable degree of fortitude in the wife, and a large share of credulity in the husband, to adjust all matrimonial differences of this kind to the satisfaction of both. But this was not the only proof the Greeks had of the conjugal fidelity of their wives : a numerous offspring was among the ancients reckoned one of the greatest of blessings ; and to have it increased by two children at a birth, was considered as one of these favours, which the gods only bestow upon superior virtue and chastity. The wife, therefore, who brought forth twins, was by that circumstance fully cleared of every foul aspersión. So little, however, is the consistency among mankind, that this very circumstance, which the Greeks reckoned the strongest proof of the chastity of their wives, is, by the Hottentots of the present time, reckoned the most infallible proof of the contrary. We have given the reason of the Greeks for their opinion, but that of the Hottentots is rather too indelicate to be related.

ON St. Valentine's day, it is customary, in many parts of Italy, for an unmarried lady to chuse, from among the young gentlemen of her acquaintance, one to be her guardian or gallant ; who, in return for the honour of this appointment, presents to her some nosegays, or other trifles, and thereby obliges himself to attend her in the most obsequious manner in all her parties of pleasure, and to all her public amusements, for the space of one year, when
he

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he may retire, and the lady may chuse another in his place. But in the course of this connection it frequently happens, that they contract such an inclination to each other, as prompts them to be coupled for life. In the times of chivalry we have seen, that the men gloried in protecting the women, and the women thought themselves safe and happy when they obtained that protection. It is probable, therefore, that this custom, though now more an affair of gallantry than of protection, is a relic of chivalry still subsisting among that romantic and sentimental people.

BUT the observation of some peculiar customs on St. Valentine's day is not confined to Italy; almost all Europe has joined in distinguishing it by some particular ceremony. As it always happens about that time of the year, when the genial influences of the spring begin to operate, it has been believed by the vulgar, that upon it the birds invariably chuse their mates for the ensuing season. In imitation, therefore, of their example, the vulgar of both sexes, in many parts of Britain, meet together; and having upon slips of paper wrote down the names of all their acquaintances, and put them into two different bags, the men draw the female names by lot, and the women the male; the man makes the woman who drew his name some trifling present, and in the rural gambol becomes her partner; and she considers him as her sweetheart, till he is otherwise disposed of, or till next Valentine's day provide her with another.

FROM shedding the blood, or taking away the life, of any animal, both sexes of the Hindoos are strictly prohibited by their religion. Foreigners, in a sneering manner, frequently take notice, that, in England, gentlemen of property are only allowed by law to
butcher

butcher hares, partridges, and pheasants. Among the Wallachians, though there is no positive institution to the contrary, yet the women never destroy the life of any creature. Whether this custom was founded by some of their ancient legislators, or whether it originated from incidental circumstances, is uncertain; but however that be, nothing can be more suitable to the gentleness and timidity, which forms the most beautiful and engaging part of the female character, and which, if imitated in other countries, might take away some of that masculine ferocity, which distinguishes many of the lower classes of women in Britain, and which they, perhaps, in a great measure contract from being constituted butchers of all the lesser animals used in our kitchens. How different is this custom of the Wallachian women from that observed by some of those in America, who assist in taking away the lives of their aged parents, when they are become of no further use to the community; and from that of the Moxes in particular, who, when delivered of twins, are said to bury one of them alive, from an ill-founded opinion, that it is impossible for one woman to nurse two children at the same time!

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FEASTING upon particular occasions is of the greatest antiquity, and, among every rude and uncultivated people, longed for with the utmost avidity, as it calls together their friends and acquaintances, whom at other times they have but few opportunities of seeing, and gives a stimulus to their torpid natures, by the intoxicating liquors then made use of. In Egypt, when, upon some particular occasion, a banquet is given, the guests are invited by a company of women hired for that purpose. The company, commonly about ten or twelve in number, is preceded by some eunuchs, and on each side guarded by several Moors with long staves: in going along, they frequently

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frequently amuse themselves and the spectators with a song adapted to the occasion, and expressive of their satisfaction at the approaching feast. As the Egyptian women are in general confined, it seems probable, that those employed in this manner are like their strolling dancers, under regulations less severe. But though this confinement is as scrupulous as jealousy can dictate, or eunuchs practise, such is the veneration shewn to their great prophet Mahomet, that at Cairo even the doors of harems, which are all the rest of the year watched by eunuchs, and fastened by bolts and chains, fly open on his birth-day, and allow the joyful prisoners to sally out, in order to celebrate a festival to the founder of their religion, and the destroyer of their liberty.

It has generally been observed, that those human beings who enjoy the smallest share of liberty, manage even that scanty portion which they have, with the least degree of prudence and discretion; because, fond of crowding too many incidents into the duration of their limited freedom, they have neither time to arrange them into any order, nor to relish them as they pass. Such is the case with the women of Cairo. On this festival, they fly from one amusement to another, and in the evening, disgusted with the whole, retire to their harems less impatient of their confinement, and with a less extravagant idea of the pleasures of liberty, than they entertained in the morning.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

E R R A T A.

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| Page | 3, line 15, | for <i>lawful</i> read <i>unlawful</i> . |
| 163, | 23, | for <i>commands</i> read <i>command</i> . |
| 173, | 11, | for <i>first despot of it</i> , read <i>their first despot</i> . |
| 281, | 20, | for <i>are</i> read <i>is</i> . |
| 334, | 20, | for <i>their</i> read <i>there</i> . |

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